

# Loss Control Tips for Auto Repair Shops, Body Shops, and Garages

No one wants to experience the loss of life, injury and disruption that a fire can cause. Here are some fire prevention methods for property owners and operators of auto repair and body shops whose businesses are particularly susceptible to fire.

It is no surprise that these businesses are among the occupancies which experience fires most frequently due to the storage of flammable liquids, and spray painting and welding that are conducted in these occupancies. Because the potential for fire is great, owners must observe fire safety codes, train employees to recognize the importance of following maintenance schedules, and recognize situations which could cause a fire. Building departments, fire departments and other government regulators have comprehensive code requirements for auto repair and body shops to follow. The code requirements are designed to prevent excessive damage from similar fire situations in your establishment. Code adherence should be considered a way to prevent injury, maintain property, and safeguard jobs.

Please use the checklist to recognize what you need to do to decrease the potential of fire.

Obtain Material Safety Data Sheets from manufacturers to be sure you are storing and using these materials in a safe manner. Use equipment according to manufacturers' specifications.

Make sure that your employees are properly trained and have proper certification to perform spray painting and welding.

Develop a fire safety plan for your shop. Make sure that all employees are familiar with it and understand its importance.

Store flammable paints, thinners, and adhesives in approved fire-rated cabinets away from ignition sources.

Check electrical equipment to locate wiring that is frayed or cracked and could cause sparks near welding or painting equipment. Make sure that equipment is properly grounded.

Clean oil spills immediately. Remove trash daily. Keep oily rags and clothing in a closed metal container until you dispose of or launder them.

Gas tanks used for welding should be properly labeled.

Do not use space heaters where spray painting or welding is done, or near oil or gas storage tanks.

Motor oil should be stored outside in closed tanks while waiting for recycle pick up.

Spray painting should be done in a spray booth designed for that purpose. Keep portable lamps or any flame source out of the spray booth. Be sure that fire extinguishers and sprinklers in spray booths are operational. Check that spray booth ventilation is working as designed. Clean filters, ducts, and interior walls of the booth. Operate the ventilation system for a period of time after painting to remove residue vapors and paint.

Use electric fixtures and switches that are designed for use in explosive environments.

Welding or cutting should be performed in areas free of combustible materials. An inspection of the area should be performed before leaving work and frequently during a 30-minute period after the welding operation has ended.

When using portable welding equipment to be sure it is used in a safe environment. Be sure the welding cart includes a fire extinguisher. Make sure hoses are in good condition.

Store oxygen and fuel tanks separately; away from heat and sunlight, in a dry, well-ventilated area.

Never weld containers that have held flammable or combustible material until the container has been thoroughly cleaned.

Enforce "NO SMOKING" rules.