

Storage and handling of combustible waste

Each year in Australia hundreds of fires involving the outdoor storage of combustible waste result in millions of dollars in damages and claim several lives.

To manage this risk, combustible waste materials should be stored and disposed of in a safe manner so as not to create a fire hazard. Businesses that generate a significant amount of combustible waste may require specialized storage systems such as balers. What your business does will depend on the type and amount of waste and the combustibility of this material. Waste dumpsters are common targets for arsonists and the placement and location of these are critical to prevent a malicious fire event to your building.



Case Study

An educational institution on a main road in inner city Melbourne had a waste bin stored in an essentially open area at the corner of the building abutting the main road footpath. Cardboard was accumulated behind the bin, along with windblown dried leaves. A fire resulted and ignition was traced to a discarded cigarette butt; whether intentional or unintentional is not known, but ensuing damage to the building resulting in a claim cost of \$96,128.00.

Recommendations

When considering the position of waste storage including industrial bins, bales of waste, idle pallets and other waste generated the following should be considered:

- ▼ Keep industrial bins a minimum distance of 3m from all exterior walls and openings,
- ▼ Keep pallets, wood crating and other packaging material a minimum of 3m from any exterior walls and openings,
- ▼ Industrial bins should have the lids closed and padlocked when not in use or when the premises are unoccupied.

For more information:
Contact us at riskengineering@vero.com.au