

Furniture Manufacturers & Upholsterers

Don't hinder your handiwork

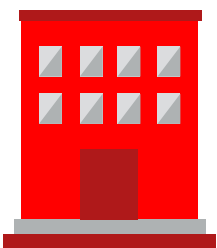
While we're here to pay to claims if the worst happens, we're all about trying to keep you and your property safe and secure in the first place.

Building furniture and upholstery often involves plenty of materials and woodworking – which means proper housekeeping and risk management is a must. Fabric, foam storage and heat processes increase the risk of fire, while sites might also store hazardous substances like adhesives and compressed gas.

Here are some steps you can take to help do your handiwork as safely and smartly as possible.



Keeping your site safe



The whole building should be kept secure and in good structural condition.

Must haves

- ✓ Any exterior cladding, access doors, windows and their locks, latches and hinges should be in good working order.

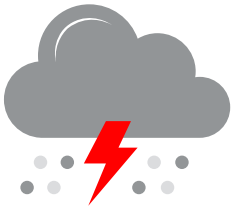
- ✓ Organise regular maintenance to check that water drainage systems (including gutters, channel drains and yard sumps) aren't blocked – especially if there are large trees nearby.



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Weather watch outs



While you can't control wild weather, you can reduce the risks that come with it.

Best practice

- Be aware of what weather or flood events are likely to affect your building or business. This can help you plan what needs to be done.
- Keep trees and shrubbery well-trimmed, and remove diseased or damaged limbs. Ask a professional arborist to assess and strategically remove branches to allow wind to blow through the trees.
- Protect water and other pipes from freezing using insulation, or install heat tape.

- Remove snow and hail from gutters as soon as it's safe to do so. This will reduce the possibility of subsequent rain overflowing gutters.

Must haves

- ✓ Ensure the building is well maintained, that walls and roof are watertight. Make sure doors and windows are close fitting.
- ✓ Make sure gutters and down pipes are not blocked by leaves or rubbish. Check before the winter season, or more frequently if needed.
- ✓ Inspect channel drains, yard storm water outlets and sumps and make sure they are all free-flowing and that curb side gutters are not blocked by leaves and rubbish.

Maintaining a secure site



Keep your business safe and intruders out.

Best practice

- High fences and secured gates are important to deter unauthorised access to the site. Use a close shackle padlock, or protected padlock that's hard to tamper with – and don't leave it unlocked on the gate at any time.
- Set up CCTV both inside and out – think high definition, motion sensing and infrared, to ensure clear images.
- Check that all unnecessary electrics are switched off when you're locking down at the end of the day.

Must haves

- ✓ Install a monitored intruder alarm with a security patrol response

that's professionally maintained at least once a year. Make sure your alarm sensors are left clear too. You might also want to consider random after-hours security patrols.

- ✓ Check that doors and windows are in good working order. It's a good idea to bar windows and fit your doors with anti-jimmy strips.
- ✓ Secure roller doors with pins and padlocks at the end of the day. Lock the electric open/close switch for motorised doors – or lock the chain on manual doors to the building or door frame.
- ✓ Keep all external areas well-lit after dark to reduce risk of burglary, malicious damage and arson. Install ram raid bollards to vulnerable entry points to the building.

Putting out the fire risk



Having the correct equipment and protection in place can reduce the potential for loss.

Best practice

- Install smoke and heat detectors and link these to Fire and Emergency New Zealand, or a security monitoring company.
- Think about installing automatic sprinklers designed to NZS 4541 – they offer excellent protection as they fight the fire and alert the Fire Brigade at the same time.
- In a sprinkler protected building make sure your team is aware of how high goods should be stacked – and what can and can't be stored. This can affect how a sprinkler system controls and extinguishes a fire.

- Have a plan in place if fire systems like sprinklers are out of commission for more than a few hours – i.e. an impairment procedure.

Must haves

- ✓ Place an appropriate number of fire extinguishers throughout the site, and make sure these are easily accessible to staff. CO2 fire extinguishers (min 3.5kg) work best on electrical equipment, while dry powder extinguishers (min 4.5kg) are a good multi-purpose option. Larger units may be required so consult your fire contractor supplier for advice.
- ✓ Have all your fire extinguishers, hoses and fire blankets checked and maintained annually by contractor who is a member of the Fire Protection association of NZ (FPANZ).

Hazardous substances



Hazardous substances need to be stored and handled safely.

Must haves

- ✓ Properly secure and restrain any gas bottles. You should also check with Worksafe if you have LPG – as you might need a compliance certification.
- ✓ Separate any non-compatible substances, limiting quantities to a minimum necessity, and checking if HSNO certification is required.

- ✓ Keep small amounts of hazardous substances in dangerous goods cabinets – and larger quantities in a dangerous goods store or separate area in the building.
- ✓ Store solvent-covered rags in a steel bin with close fitting steel lid.

Good housekeeping counts



A regular routine can help keep your factory safe.

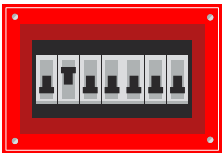
Best practice

- Make sure fire exits and passageways are clear of stored items.

Must haves

- ✓ Keep storage – particularly foam and fabric stock – away from lighting and ignition sources and well within the capabilities of any sprinkler installations.
- ✓ Keep industrial sewing machines clean, with lint removed daily and disposed of appropriately.
- ✓ Clean your work area regularly, removing foam offcuts and fabric fly.
- ✓ Limit the amount of foam you store to the minimum necessary amount.
- ✓ Try not to store soft furnishing items on the floor to protect them from water damage.
- ✓ Clean woodwork areas of sawdust and offcuts at the end of each day.
- ✓ External waste and recycle bins/skids should be kept away from the building, ideally 10m, and securely padlocked.

Electrical



Faulty or damaged electrical systems can lead to fires.

Best practice

- Undertake a Periodic Verification with visual inspection and limited testing for older buildings, especially where there are ongoing electrical issues or where the system shows wear and tear.
- Get a professional electrician to provide a comprehensive check every few months.
- Make sure electrical switchboards and installations are fault free and kept in good condition, especially in older buildings.
- Ensure switchboards are dust free. Enclose open switchboards.
- Replace high intensity discharge lamps according to the manufacturers time frames. HID lights should be turned off for at least 15 minutes at least once a week.

- Consider using LED lights. They have lower operating temperatures and lower current usage – which could mean lower risks as well.

Must haves

- ✓ Commission thermographic imaging of switchboards to help identify elevated temperatures (which can indicate potential failure) and overloading.
- ✓ Have an electrician undertake regular checks for elevated temperatures and overloading.
- ✓ Make sure all portable electrical equipment is tested and tagged. Keep extension leads and power boards to a minimum. Damaged leads and boards should not be used.
- ✓ Maintain all electrical equipment in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.

Watching out for water damage



With routine checks and a proper plan, the risks can be seriously reduced.

Best practice

- Plumb washing machine and dishwasher outlets into the wastewater pipe, not simply with the waste pipe hooked over a sink.

Must haves

- ✓ Know where the water shut off valve(s) are for the water supply. Where possible, shut off the water supply during extended shutdowns or when not needed e.g. over the summer holidays or in an unoccupied building.
- ✓ Ensure flexi-hoses are checked regularly and replaced if showing signs of damage – or every 10 years otherwise.

- ✓ Check shower enclosures for signs of deterioration, especially to the wall boards/tiling.
- ✓ Inspect plumbing, water pipes and waste lines for leaks, damage or corrosion. Check that all basins, tanks, etc have overflow facilities. Process tanks should be banded.
- ✓ Check and clean the roof regularly. This is important before the winter season and after storms. Pay attention to membrane-style roof coverings as these have a limited life and can be affected by environmental exposures.
- ✓ Check flashings where the walls and roof meet, and also pipes and skylights where they penetrate the roof covering.

Good management controls



Manage activities that minimise the risk of fire.

- Before leaving at the end of the day, take a look around all of the areas to see that everything's as it should be.
- Make sure anyone uses and operates any plant and equipment according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Maintain the building, building systems, plant and equipment regularly.

Must haves

- ✓ Maintain good housekeeping standards internally and externally.
- ✓ Ensure there is a robust self-inspection routine in place – a simple, daily look around all areas to see that everything is as it should be.
- ✓ Have a proper procedure in place if fire systems – like sprinklers – are out of action for more than a few hours.
- ✓ Limit any smoking to a designated area free of any waste bins, and equipped with proper bins for throwing away cigarette butts.

Don't get disrupted



Plan for business disruptions.

Best practice

- Invest in a business continuity plan with a clear process for prioritising business activities, functions or services, in case your business is disrupted by an incident.
- Consult with a professional to check if your cyber security measures are good enough, especially if you maintain confidential records such as a customer databases, or bank account details.

Must haves

- ✓ Back up critical data frequently and consider using secure Cloud services.
- ✓ Ensure you've got antivirus protection on your computer and regularly update it.

Visit vero.co.nz/risk-profiler to check out our other advice sheets for more tips and in-depth information about managing risk.

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