


# Flammable Liquids

## Putting out fire risks

However they're used or stored, flammable liquids need special attention. That's because they can ignite easily and burn rapidly increasing the risk of fire spread and the extent of damage. Here's what you can do to reduce the risks.



## Get to know the label

All flammable liquids are rated according to their individual Flash Points from Classification 3.1A – 3.1D (with A being the highest risk). Flammable liquids can be identified by a label attached to the container in the shape of a red diamond  with the words Flammable liquid in it. The label will also state the liquid's classification. All flammable liquids should come with a Safety Data Sheet showing the Flash Point of the liquid.

## Understand the classifications

- Category A (very high hazard)
  - Classification 3.1A e.g. Petrol
- Category B (high hazard)
  - Classification 3.1B e.g. Methyl Ethyl Ketone
- Category C (medium hazard)
  - Classification 3.1C e.g. Mineral Turpentine, Kerosene, Xylol, Butynol
- Category D (low hazard)
  - Classification 3.1D e.g. Fuel oil

## Manage your storage

The Worksafe website, [worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz) lists the legal requirements for handling and storage of flammable liquids above certain volumes.

It's good practice to adhere to them, even for smaller volumes, as all flammable liquids pose a fire risk if not managed properly. Make sure the containers are closed tightly and stored correctly. It's important that they are not stored in the same cabinet or nearby other hazardous substances, especially oxidising agents.

## Reduce ignition risks

- Only remove the volume you need from the storage area by decanting into a smaller metal or glass container with a tight fitting lid or cap.
- Ensure that any flammable liquid to be used or stored is at least 3m away from likely ignition sources or any welding, cutting or grinding.
- Limit the amount of time a container is left open – this reduces the release of flammable vapours.
- Make sure the work area is well ventilated to dilute any flammable vapours produced, it's also important from a health and safety perspective.
- Place materials such as used rags, paper or materials that contain flammable residue from paints, solvents, catalyst compounds etc, in a metal container with a close fitting metal lid before disposal.



## Think smart, stay safe

- Visit the Worksafe website, they have a calculator to help you determine the requirements for the type and quantity of flammable liquids you hold.
- Keep in mind recommendations on the Worksafe website, even for small quantities. If you can't implement them perhaps consider using safer (higher Flash Point) alternatives.
- Think about the processes you use, and how to keep minimising risks – for example if you're spray painting, you should have a certified spray booth and tinting room.
- Ensure you have a process for the correct disposal of any flammable-liquid-based waste.
- Check you have the right type (and number) of fire extinguishers.
- Put in monitored fire detection systems in place for after hours protection.
- Make sure your spill kit is in order, and easily available.

## Need more info?

Check out the Worksafe website [worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)

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