

Checklist: Using Tanks in Your Refinishing Shop

Using open tanks in your shop can have potential harmful affects on your employees. Be aware of what to watch for.

Equipment

- Tanks of paint remover emit potentially harmful vapors. Proper ventilation is important. Make sure you know whether the vapor from your stripping material is lighter than air or heavier than air. (Some remover vapors are lighter than air. Methylene chloride vapor is heavier than air.) Exhaust fan intakes should be located accordingly--higher than the work surface or near the floor for methylene chloride.
- Remover tanks should be tightly covered al all times when not in use. This will save loss through evaporation, and minimize your exposure to vapors.
- Periodically remove stripped finish from your paint remover tank to promote the efficiency of the stripping process.
- Make sure the paint remover in your tank is working as effectively as possible. Observe the temperature recommendations provided by the manufacturer. Most paint removers work most effectively at more than 70 degrees Fahrenheit--and only half as efficiently at 50 degrees.

Employees

- Be especially careful to avoid breathing vapor from a caustic tank. Most old furniture finishes contain lead. Lead is dissolved by caustics, and will be contained in caustic vapors.
- Protect eyes and skin from contact with remover from tanks. Wear goggles, rubber gloves, long sleeves and an apron while working around a tank
- There must be a source of clean, fresh water near the paint remover tank so that remover can be quickly and thoroughly rinsed from skin and eyes in case of accidental contact.