

Checklist: Refinishing Safety

When using chemicals such as volatile organic compounds or hazardous air pollutants, keep on top of safety issues affecting your employees.

Precautions

- Carefully read all Material Safety Data Sheets that come with the stripping, rinsing and finishing materials you use in your refinishing shop.
- Make sure you know the “flash point” of the materials you are using. The lower the flash point, the more easily a material is ignited.
- Some materials used in stripping and rinsing -- thinners and petroleum distillates -- are a fire hazard.
- Methylene chloride, a common stripping material, is not easily ignited, but many of the paints and other finishes that become mixed with methylene chloride as it is used are ignitable. After considerable use, methylene chloride contaminated with other materials will burn and may produce very toxic gases in the process.

Workspace

- Enforce a strict “No Smoking” rule in the work area of your shop.
- Make sure that a fresh air duct in the work area is adequate to replace all the air drawn out of the room by exhaust fans located near the stripping area, the rinse area, or in a paint booth. Without adequate fresh air intake, exhaust fans may draw air from the furnace flue or the hot water heater flue. Worker exposure to combustion gases including carbon monoxide will result. Adequate ventilation with fresh air will also prevent the build-up and possible ignition of combustible gases.