



Outdoor storage

What is the hazard?

Goods, combustible pallets, waste containers etc. stored outside in the yard increase the risk of fire. Arson is the most common fire source, but hot work, cigarette butts, self-igniting materials, sparks, friction, fireworks, engines, vehicles and lightning strikes have also started fires in yards.

A fire starting outside can spread to other items stored nearby and to adjacent buildings. A fire can also spread to buildings through windows and ventilation openings etc. which can cause the available automatic sprinkler systems to not be able to control the fire. Wind can blow sparks over long distances, which can result in the ignition of combustible material located even relatively far away.

Theft is also a risk when you store anything which has a resale value in the open.



How to reduce the risk

- Remove all excess storage and waste from the yard. This includes items such as idle pallets, discarded crates, dismantled machine parts, excess materials from installation or construction work, items left by contractors, and waste from production or other operations.
- The storage of combustibles should not be allowed closer than 10 metres from the buildings, or 15 metres if the walls contain combustible insulation. Plan carefully how to store items that cannot be stored inside. The preferred way is to store items inside purpose-built sheds and containers made of metal or other suitable materials. If the outside wall is a classified fire wall without any openings, items can be stored next to it.
- Do not store any combustibles under canopies, unless the sprinkler protection is designed for this specific fire load.
- A minimum distance of 10 metres should also be kept from public highways, railways, and possible ignition sources such as incinerators.
- Ensure that waste is regularly transported away to prevent the overfilling of waste containers.
- If you allow smoking in the yard, choose and mark carefully the locations where smoking is permitted, and ensure that there are fire-proof ash receptacles provided.
- Prohibit the parking of cars and other motor vehicles alongside buildings or stored goods. Preferably the cars should be parked outside the fenced area, and heavy equipment should be parked in purpose-built garages or in clearly marked safe places in the yard.
- Keep an eye on the parking of vehicles during coffee and other breaks. They should never be left closer than 10 metres away from combustible structures or materials.
- Regular inspections or surveillance should be in force.
- Battery charging areas should have smoke & heat ventilation installed.
- Portable fire extinguishers should be available near the entrance.
- The extinguishers should be suitable for use on electrical fires.
- Rooms should be provided with automatic sprinkler protection (12.5 mm/min)



How to reduce the risk of arson or theft:

- Provide the yard with adequate fencing. The gates should preferably be kept locked at all times. Access through gates should be controlled and recorded by e.g. electronic keys and CCTV cameras.
- Ensure that the yard is well illuminated during evenings and nights.
- The security service company should conduct frequent security rounds i.e. typically at least once or twice a night. The use of barcodes can monitor this service. During longer periods of inactivity the frequency of the rounds needs to be carefully considered.
- Consider CCTV surveillance of the yard. The video material should be stored for a sufficiently long period. The surveillance should cover at least the whole perimeter of the site, including all gates, but preferably all outdoor areas.
- Consider the installation of other technical surveillance, i.e. motion sensors with alarms relayed to a constantly attended location, such as the gatehouse or the station of the security service company.
- The above issues deal with the security of the outside areas of a facility, only. They are of course an integral part of the security system of the whole facility.

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