



# Laundry operations – spontaneous combustion

## Safeguarding your business

Spontaneous combustion of laundry is increasingly becoming the cause of fire insurance claims, resulting in significant losses for businesses.

If laundry is not correctly handled, spontaneous ignition or combustion can occur. Spontaneous combustion is caused by a chemical reaction, or oxidation, which causes an increase in temperature. If the material reaches its ignition temperature, spontaneous ignition, or combustion occurs. In laundry operations this most commonly occurs in piles of soiled laundry, particularly if soiled with oil or similar material, or piles of laundry which has not fully cooled after being in a dryer.

Experience shows us that many serious fire losses can be avoided. We have used our industry knowledge and claims experience to produce this easy to follow guide and self-assessment checklist.

Below are some helpful hints to help you avoid fire hazards:

### Soiled Laundry

- Don't leave soiled laundry in a pile or laundry bin overnight
- Never place soiled laundry in a dryer
- Don't use bleach, stain remover or other oxidising chemicals until immediately before washing

### Dryer Operation

- Always follow the manufacturer's operating instructions
- Operate equipment within its recommended capacity
- Don't interrupt the equipment's operating cycle
- Immediately remove laundry from the dryer when cycle is complete
- Allow dried items to further cool before folding and storing
- Consider outsourcing laundry operations

### Maintenance

- Inspect and clean the lint filter after every use
- Ensure all dryers are regularly maintained, including calibration of timers and temperature controls

### New Equipment

- When purchasing a new dryer consider automatic fire suppression functionality

### Self-assessment checklist

Company name

Location

Simply complete the self-assessment checklist below to help you identify potential hazards. If you answer 'False' to any of the questions below, further consideration and risk management may be required. We recommend you contact your Broker, or Acerta, for expert advice.

#### Spontaneous combustion fire safety

1. Soiled laundry is not left in piles or laundry bins overnight?  True  False
2. If false, is there a soiled laundry room with 90 minute fire rated walls, self closing door, and remotely monitored smoke detectors or automatic sprinklers?  True  False
3. Bleach, stain remover or other chemicals are only applied to laundry immediately before washing?  True  False
4. Soiled laundry is never placed in the dryer?  True  False
5. Staff are aware of, and always follow the manufacturer's operation instructions for the dryer?  True  False
6. The dryer is never overloaded, and always operated within its designed capacity?  True  False
7. The dryer always runs its full cycle, including cool down, and is never switched off early?  True  False
8. Laundry is immediately removed from the dryer when the full cycle is complete?  True  False
9. Items are hung or individually laid flat to cool before folding after drying?  True  False
10. Dryer lint filters are inspected and cleaned after every use?  True  False

Name

Signature

Date

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We suggest you file this completed checklist for future reference.

This fact sheet has been developed by the team at Acerta to provide you with relevant information and tips to help you manage risk.

As a part of the Guild Group, Acerta has extensive experience in commercial insurance and risk management. Together, your Broker and Acerta can work with you to assist in safeguarding your business by managing risk.