

Fire Safety and Hot Work

A makerspace has plenty of fuel (sawdust, wood, rags, finishes) and plenty of heat (welders, grinders, lasers, soldering irons, 3D printer hotends). This page covers the habits that keep those two apart.

Fire extinguishers

- Fire extinguisher locations are pointed out during the New Member Orientation tour. Know where the nearest one is before you start work.
- **Never block an extinguisher**, a fire lane, an electrical panel or a sprinkler head.
- A **class ABC** extinguisher works on ordinary combustibles (wood, paper, cloth), flammable liquids and electrical fires. Use it with the PASS method: **P**ull the pin, **A**im at the base of the fire, **S**queeze the handle, **S**weep side to side.
- Only fight a fire that is small and contained, and only if you have a clear way out behind you. Otherwise get out and call 911. See **Shop Safety: Emergency Information**.
- If you use an extinguisher, even briefly, report it so it can be recharged or replaced. See **Shop Safety: Incident and Near-Miss Reporting**.

To be confirmed: a list or floor plan of extinguisher locations, and which extinguisher types are in which areas.

Flammable liquids and finishes

- Keep solvents, paints, stains and other flammable liquids closed when not in use, and store them in the flammables cabinet.
- Do not use or store flammable liquids near welding, grinding or other sources of sparks or flame.

To be confirmed: where the flammables cabinet is and what may be stored in it.

Oily rags

Rags soaked with oil-based stains, linseed oil, tung oil and similar finishes can **heat up and catch fire on their own** as they dry. Never wad them up and toss them in the trash. Lay them out flat to dry outdoors or away from anything flammable, or put them in a closed metal container filled with water, before disposal. See **Facility Operations: Trash, Recycling and Hazardous Waste**.

Hot work: welding, cutting, plasma and grinding

- Clear combustibles (sawdust, wood scraps, cardboard, rags) away from the work area before you strike an arc or start grinding. Sparks travel farther than you expect.
- Watch the area for a while after you finish; smoldering material can flare up later.
- Wear the PPE for the job. See **Shop Safety: Personal Protective Equipment**.
- Hot work belongs in the Metal Shop. See **Metal Shop: Metal Shop Overview**.

Lasers and 3D printers

- **Never leave the laser unattended while it is running.** This is posted on the machine. See **Digital Fabrication: Laser Cutter**.
- Only cut materials that are safe for the laser. See **Digital Fabrication: Laser-Safe and Prohibited Materials**.

Electrical fire prevention

Overloaded cords and improvised plug adapters are a common cause of shop fires. See **Shop Safety: Electrical Safety and Lockout/Tagout**.

Revision #1

Created 2026-10-22 17:45:18 UTC by Kerr, Casey

Updated 2026-10-22 17:45:18 UTC by Kerr, Casey