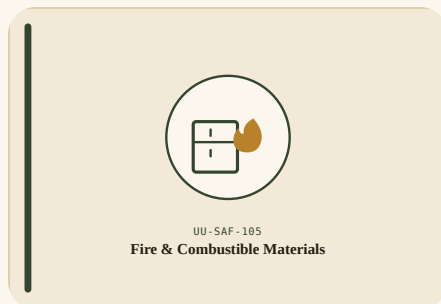


Fire & Combustible Materials

Handling in the Shop

Material storage, ignition control, and suppression readiness for a shop floor that carries more fire risk than it looks like.



1. Why an upholstery shop carries more fire risk than it looks like

A shop floor stacked with foam, fabric bolts, and adhesive doesn't look like a high fire-risk environment the way a chemical plant does — but foam and textile scrap burn fast and hot, spray adhesives are flammable, and fine dust from cutting operations is a documented combustible-dust hazard in this industry (see *Dust, Fumes & Ventilation, UU-SAF-104*). Fire risk in an upholstery shop is real and worth a deliberate, written plan rather than an assumption that "it won't happen here."

2. Material storage

- Store foam away from ignition sources (welding/grinding areas, heaters, electrical panels) — foam ignites readily and burns fast once started.
- Keep fabric and foam scrap in covered bins, cleared regularly, rather than accumulating in open piles on the floor — both a fire fuel-load issue and a housekeeping/tripping issue.

- Store flammable adhesives and solvents in approved flammable-storage cabinets, away from ignition sources and separated from the general material storage area.
- Store oily or adhesive-soaked rags in closed, fire-rated metal containers — these can self-heat and ignite spontaneously under the wrong conditions if left in an open pile.

3. Ignition source control

- No open flame, welding, or grinding work permitted near foam storage, fabric storage, or spray adhesive areas.
- Electrical equipment and extension cords inspected periodically for damage — frayed cords near flammable material storage are a common, preventable ignition source.
- Spray adhesive work done in a ventilated area away from any spark or flame source, consistent with the solvent-vapor controls in UU-SAF-104.

4. Fire suppression and response readiness

CONTROL	BASELINE
Fire extinguishers	Appropriately rated (foam and textile fires are typically Class A; solvent/adhesive fires may need Class B coverage) extinguishers placed where staff can reach them quickly, inspected/tagged on schedule
Clear egress paths	Aisles and exits kept clear of material storage and scrap — a blocked exit turns a manageable fire into a life-safety emergency
Staff training	Everyone on the floor knows where extinguishers are, how to use one, and when the right call is to evacuate rather than fight the fire themselves
Local fire code	Confirm current fire code requirements for flammable material storage quantities and spray booth/ventilation specifications with your local fire marshal — these vary by jurisdiction and are enforced locally

Compliance note

This is a working baseline, not a substitute for a site-specific fire safety plan. Confirm current requirements with your local fire marshal and your commercial insurer — many insurers will do

a no-cost walkthrough and flag specific gaps for your facility.

Sources

General trade safety reference. Local fire code requirements for flammable storage and ventilation vary by jurisdiction.

A note on this content: This article is general trade guidance written for Upholsterers United's member network — it isn't legal, safety, or compliance advice, and it isn't a substitute for the current text of any standard, code, or manufacturer specification it references. Standards get revised and local requirements vary; before relying on anything here for an actual compliance or liability decision, verify current requirements with the applicable standards body, code official, or material manufacturer.