

**USE AND STORAGE OF INFLAMMABLE AND  
OTHER HAZARDOUS MATERIALS  
IN TELEPHONE BUILDINGS**

**1. GENERAL**

1.01 This section covers the restrictions and precautions to be observed in the use and storage on premises occupied by the telephone company, of inflammable materials and other substances the presence of which would be hazardous in event of fire.

1.02 The employees charged with the maintenance of a building shall be continually observant of the conditions existing therein as to the use and storage of the materials covered in this section. They should be in a position to advise other departments concerning the handling of such materials, and should see that any improper practices are corrected.

1.03 Order and cleanliness are essential in avoiding conditions which might be responsible for fires. The care of all property should be systematic and thorough, and frequent inspections should be made to see that proper precautions are being taken to avoid hazardous conditions or practices. Carelessness should be combated by means of continuous educational effort.

**2. GASOLINE, NAPHTHA, BENZINE**

2.01 Gasoline, naphtha, benzine, and similar inflammable liquids having a low flashpoint are not ordinarily required in telephone buildings except in garages. If exceptional circumstances require their use elsewhere, special arrangements shall be made with the chief engineer, who will specify the conditions of use, the amount which may be stored, and the containers and locations to be used for storage. (Only containers bearing the Underwriters label will be approved for such use, the location of storage will ordinarily be in a locker outside the building, and the amount allowed will ordinarily not exceed one quart.)

Without such special permission, liquids in this classification must not be kept on hand even in safety cans in paint lockers.

2.02 Particular attention is directed to the fact that gasoline lamps, stoves, torches, or furnaces must not be used in telephone buildings. If brought in for storage, they must first be emptied. Fires in stoves and furnaces must never be started with gasoline.

2.03 Gasoline for use in motor vehicles and stationary engines is ordinarily stored in underground tanks. It may also be kept in approved portable tanks in garages. Approved safety cans are customarily provided in garages for use in carrying gasoline to stalled cars, etc., but without special permission from the chief engineer gasoline shall not be kept on hand in these cans. An authorized exception permits the storing of not exceeding five gallons of gasoline in one five-gallon Underwriters' Laboratories approved safety can in each garage for use only in connection with portable gasoline-driven manhole pumps at such times as the garages may be unattended.

2.04 Safety containers for gasoline should always be painted red.

**3. OIL, PAINT, SOLVENTS, ACIDS, ETC.**

3.01 Oil, shallac, alcohol, kerosene, enamel, paint,\* turpentine, thinners, furniture polishes, fly spray, cleaning solvents, and similar liquids are inherently dangerous. Acids and other caustic or corrosive materials, and substances which may liberate noxious fumes, although not always inflammable are fully as dangerous in case of fire. Furthermore, any vegetable or animal oil in contact with a combustible material may lead to spontaneous combustion and hence is a potential menace. None of these things shall be stored except in locations where special facilities have been furnished for the purpose, and even then the quantities kept on hand

\*See also Part 5

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shall be the absolute minimum required. Except as otherwise specifically provided storage facilities for materials of this class will be in metal paint lockers outside of buildings, or in underground tanks.

3.02 Small quantities of ordinary office supplies such as type cleaner, provided they are secured through regular Company supply channels, used in accordance with approved instructions or the directions supplied with the material, and handled and stored in a manner obviously involving minimum fire hazards, may be kept in Telephone Company buildings. Multiple marking and stencil paints and solvents approved for use with them should be kept in approved metal boxes.

3.03 Approved drums or other closed containers will be provided for the storage of new and used lubricating oil in garages. Small quantities of oil may be kept on hand in suitable cans or bottles at other locations for day to day use in lubricating motors, generators, switches, etc. Metal drip pans should be placed wherever oil is likely to drop and should be cleaned frequently. Leaving of sawdust, cloth, etc., on floors or drip pans to absorb oil drippings is absolutely prohibited

3.04 Portable kerosene furnaces may be operated in furnace rooms, when their use is absolutely essential and there is no suitable place available outside the building. With this one exception, the use of kerosene lamps, stoves, or furnaces in telephone buildings is prohibited. Kerosene should never be used to start fires in stoves, furnaces, or incinerators.

3.05 Approved safety cans for kerosene should be painted green. Kerosene may be kept in such cans on trucks in garages, and in metal paint lockers outside of building, but never in central office equipment quarters.

3.06 KS-7860 petroleum spirits, which is used for central office equipment cleaning purposes, is inflammable and is classed with kerosene in respect to fire hazard by the Underwriters' Laboratories, Incorporated. In central office equipment quarters the KS-7860 petroleum spirits should be

kept in a tightly capped and suitably marked four-ounce bottle or in a one-quart, orange colored safety can. When not in use the petroleum spirits should be stored in a metal locker inside of building.

3.07 Trichloroethylene, KS-8446 solvent (monoethyl-ether or ethylene-glycol, which is used for removing multiple marking paint) and similar non-inflammable solvents may be kept on hand in buildings in quantities sufficient for current use. They should be stored in tightly closed containers in metal lockers or cabinets.

3.08 "Liquid Solvent No. 1" and similar cleaning solvents evaporate to leave a highly inflammable residue. They should therefore never be left in an open vessel or uncapped can, and should be stored in a locker provided for inflammable liquids outside of building.

3.09 KS-7435 thinner, which is used as a thinner for the Du Pont RK-302 varnish may be kept on hand in Telephone Company buildings in quantities sufficient for current use. (When supplied in four-ounce bottles the number on hand at any one time shall not exceed twelve.) The thinner should be stored in tightly closed containers in a metal locker or cabinet.

3.10 The information as to inflammability appearing in advertisements and on labels of proprietary paints, solvents, cleaners, liquid cements, etc., is not always entirely dependable, and the exact composition of these products is not usually known by the purchaser. On the other hand, the composition of products secured through regular company supply channels is usually controlled by specification, and for many specific purposes it has been possible to provide non-inflammable materials. (Some examples are Bell System type cleaner, rubber cement, and record lacquer.) For this reason preference should always be given the use of products secured through the regular supply channels.

3.11 Paint in unopened containers may be stored on the shelves in storerooms and similar locations in quantities sufficient to meet reasonable requirements; but paint in containers which have once been opened shall be stored only in metal paint lockers outside

of buildings. Paint in opened containers may be kept in the building while in actual use, except as provided elsewhere. (See paragraph 5.04 in particular), but must not be stored in the building over night. (Note that this applies to outside contractors as well as to telephone employees).

3.12 At those locations where it is not necessary to provide an incinerator, oily rags, which have been used with any inflammable liquid or material shall be taken out of the safety can in the building at the end of each day and deposited in a suitable air tight metal can that is to be kept at a safe distance away from the building adjacent to the rubbish cans of the building. The can for storing these rags should be kept securely covered at all times.

3.12A At some locations where there is not suitable or sufficient space and the rubbish cans are kept in the basement of the building, the oily rags which have been used with inflammable liquid or material, should be placed at the end of each day in a suitable air tight metal can that is to be kept adjacent to the rubbish cans so that these rags can be picked up with the regular rubbish pick up.

3.13 Tight metal cans of suitable size shall be provided for storage of painters' drop cloths, and the cloths kept in them when not in use. Drop cloths shall be reasonably clean, and shall not be used if large areas have been soaked with oil or paint.

3.14 Painters' work clothes shall be hung in metal lockers when not in use.

3.15 Lockers provided for the storage of clothing shall be used only for the purpose intended, and never for keeping papers, cloths, cans, bottles, matches, or other miscellaneous articles.

#### 4. CLEANING, POLISHING, WIPING, AND DUST CLOTHS

4.01 Quantities of cleaning, polishing, wiping, and dust cloths kept on hand should be as small as reasonably possible. This applies both to clean cloths and, in the case of cloths which are laundered and reused, to used cloths held for laundering. In equipment

rooms, such cloths should be stored in metal lockers. If any cloths become contaminated with oil, paint, or other inflammable liquids, the precautions of 3.12 should be observed.

NOTE: The substances used in impregnating polishing cloths do not increase the inflammability of the cloths sufficiently to make necessary any special precautions which would not apply in the storage and handling of non-impregnated cloths.

#### 5. CELLULOSE NITRATE PRODUCTS

5.01 The use or storage of cellulose nitrate products involves severe fire hazards due to the fact that they not only burn readily but generate toxic gases in so doing. Among such products are celluloid, ordinary photographic film (as distinguished from "safety" film), and many paints and lacquers. It is not expected that any of these products will be commonly required in telephone buildings, and when special circumstances require their use, except as outlined below, the chief engineer should be consulted.

5.02 The use of small quantities of film for occasional photographs in telephone buildings is allowed, provided ordinary care is exercised to avoid fires. Similarly, developed films may be brought into telephone buildings in small quantities for examination. However, neither developed nor undeveloped cellulose nitrate film should be left in a telephone building over night. Special arrangements should be made with the chief engineer if handling of cellulose nitrate film is to be of more than occasional occurrence.

5.03 Cellulose nitrate motion picture film may be shown only in buildings having a projection booth. The film should not be left anywhere in the building except in the projection booth, and not even there for a longer period than required for the showing. It must never remain in the building over night. Recognized safety rules governing transportation of such films and handling of them in projection booths should be adhered to, and all such handling should be done by experienced people familiar with the hazards involved.

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5.04 Cellulose nitrate paints or lacquers may be used only in spray booths provided especially for the purpose. Specific regulations governing work carried on in spray booths, frequency and method of cleaning the booths, etc., shall be provided by the building superintendent for each such location owned or operated by this company, and strict adherence shall be given them.

5.05 Celluloid products are not to be used in telephone buildings. Cellulose acetate products have been provided for use as designation strips and for other purposes for which a celluloid-like substance is required.

### 6. WRITING PAPER, FORMS, AND RECORDS

6.01 Unnecessarily large accumulations of writing paper, forms and records in exposed places should be avoided. Necessary stores should be packed or filed neatly in desks, storage or filing cabinets, or store-rooms.

### 7. TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES

7.01 Telephone directories should not be stored in central office buildings when other suitably located storage space is available. When it is necessary to distribute directories from central office buildings, the supply at these locations should not be greater than the requirements for a reasonable length of time, considering available company mail or other delivery service.

### 8. PACKED EQUIPMENT AND COMBUSTIBLE PACKING MATERIALS

8.01 Packed equipment that presents a fire hazard should not be stored in a central office building for an extended period of time. The chief engineer should be requested to make arrangements for unpacking the equipment so that the combustible packing, boxes, and cartons may be removed from the building.

8.02 Equipment that is intended for installation in one central office building or at a P.B.X. location should not be stored in another central office building unless no other

storage space is available and then only after the approval of the chief engineer has been given.

8.03 Empty packing boxes should not be allowed to accumulate.

8.04 Excelsior, paper scraps, and other combustible packing materials kept for use at locations where packing is done should be stored only in covered metal receptacles; scrap cans are available for this purpose. For locations where large quantities of such materials are used and the scrap cans do not provide sufficient storage space, arrangements should be made with the building superintendent to provide suitable metal bins.

### 9. COMBUSTIBLE REFUSE, SCRAPS, AND WASTE

9.01 Handling of rags and waste used with oil, paint, and solvents was discussed in Part 3.

9.02 Other refuse and scraps may be deposited in approved waste baskets. (All waste baskets will be of metal, having solid sides, and with the bottom raised at least one inch from the floor.)

9.03 Waste baskets should be emptied daily, and the contents placed in approved scrap cans (galvanized iron, with tight fitting cover overlapping the sides approximately two inches) pending permanent disposal according to local instructions. Refuse must not be allowed to accumulate in large quantities.

### 10. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

#### Matches

10.01 Sulphur matches (the ordinary strike-anywhere match) shall not be brought onto any premises occupied by the telephone company. (Except, of course, that it would be obviously impracticable to attempt to supervise the carrying of matches on the persons of non-employees.)

10.02 A limited supply of safety matches may be carried on the person or kept in a metal receptacle at locations where their use is required.

10.03 Matches should never be used in the vicinity of switchboards or wiring forms, in battery rooms, or near any combustible materials which might be ignited accidentally.

#### Candles

10.04 The use or storage of candles in telephone buildings is prohibited.

#### Flashlight Powder

10.05 Flashlight powder shall not be brought into a telephone building. ("Photo flash" bulbs are permitted.)

#### Christmas Trees

10.06 Whenever a Christmas tree is to be set up in a telephone building, only a flame proof tree should be used and the building superintendent notified. Candles are not to be used and all decorations shall be of non-combustible or slow-burning type. For instructions relative to electric lighting sets see other sections of Bell System Practices on electric wiring and fixtures. Adequate fire extinguishing apparatus should be located in a readily accessible location near the tree.

#### Items Not Covered

10.07 If the use of any product not covered above is required, and it is known or suspected that its handling involves fire hazards, the advice of the building superintendent should be secured.