

# WOOD PALLET STORAGE

ALLIANZ RISK CONSULTING



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## INTRODUCTION

Wood pallets have been used for years in warehouse, manufacturing, and distribution operations. In fact, they are the most efficient method of shipping, moving, and storing goods. However, once pallets have achieved their purpose, they are often stacked inside buildings in out-of-the-way corners, near loading docks, or in outdoor storage yards.

## THE HAZARDS

Empty, or idle, pallets represent a serious fire hazard. They are usually made of cheap wood that dries out quickly, and broken or splintered ends make great kindling. Stacking them is a sure way to invite trouble and they burn hot and fast. Consider these facts:

- The higher the stack, the greater the volatility, and challenge to the effectiveness of the sprinkler system.
- Most standard facility fire suppression systems are incapable of handling the fire and heat generated by a high stack of wood pallets.
- Stacking pallets outdoors against or near the side of a building creates an increased fire hazard, as storage yards are not usually protected by sprinkler systems.
- Sprinkler-density requirements increase exponentially with the height of the stored pallets.

**NOTE:** The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has specific guidelines in NFPA 13, 2019 Edition, Section 20.14.1.2 regarding fire sprinkler density requirements based on the height and number of wood pallets stored,

sprinkler head temperature, and aisle space. If you have any questions, please contact your Allianz Risk Consultant for assistance.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE?

You can reduce the fire hazard caused by empty wood pallets by storing them in an outside, fenced yard, and as far away from buildings and structures as possible. Follow these outside storage guidelines:

- Remove any combustible material from the area, such as cardboard, paper, and weeds.
- Keep pallets away from propane or other fuel tanks.
- Stabilize the stacking arrangement so they will not tip over.
- Keep pallets away from regular vehicular traffic (forklifts, delivery vans, trucks).
- Store pallets well within the property to avoid the possibility of vandalism or arson.

**NOTE:** The NFPA has specific requirements as to the distance from walls idle wood pallets can be stored, this is found in the NFPA Fire Protection Handbook 20th Edition, Chapter 16, Table 16.5.8. Wall construction, openings, and number of pallets being stored are all contributing factors that determine appropriate distance from the building for storage. If you have any questions, please contact your Allianz Risk Consultant for assistance.

## CONCLUSION

Consider the fire hazards of accumulated empty wood pallets stored inside your facility. To mitigate the danger, instruct workers to remove empty pallets to an outdoor storage yard. If your business reuses wood pallets and maintains these inside the building, be sure they are stored in an area protected by an adequate fire suppression system. Pallets stored in yards or detached sheds must be arranged so they do not pose a hazard to buildings and other structures. Remove any unused pallets from your facility as soon as possible to reduce the fire hazard.

Design: [Graphic Design Centre](#)

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