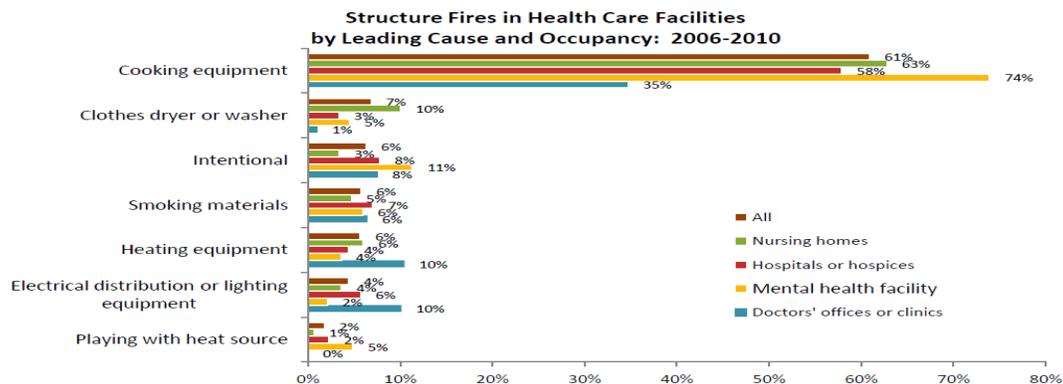


Laundry Guidelines

Background:

Healthcare facilities having to provide clean linens (i.e. mops, patient/resident clothing, towels, sheets and pads) on a daily basis creates high demand. With the use of commercial dryer's using high heat, laundry fires continue to be the 2nd leading cause of healthcare fires. Per the NFPA's fire statics as seen below:



Prevention:

- All mop heads and cleaning cloths; with potentially combustible or flammable compounds on them, when stored or gathered for laundering should be placed in a metal (non-combustible) container with a similar tight fitting lid. It is not necessary to place these items in water. Caution should be taken to avoid storing and gathering too many mop heads and cloths with multiple compounds for an extended period of time in the same container. Used items should be stored separate from where the flammable or combustible compounds are stored.
- Mop heads and cleaning cloths, with potentially combustible or flammable compounds on them, gathered for laundering should be washed the same day. If these items cannot be washed the day they are collected, the metal container with the tight fitting lid, should be stored outside the center until they are ready to be washed.
- After laundered and cooled, these clean, mop heads and/or cleaning cloths, which have been exposed to potentially combustible or flammable compounds, should also be stored, in a metal (non-combustible container) with a tight fitting lid (the oily compound may never fully wash out of the fabric).
- Cotton and microfiber mop heads should be air-dried. This is not only due to the cleaning compounds found on the mop, but also due to the nature of the mop materials. The strings of cotton mops pose a high threat of igniting a dryer and the heat of a dryer destroys, by melting the synthetic fiber of a microfiber.
- Cleaning cloths containing compounds which are not potentially combustible or flammable (such as dish(soapy) cloths, sanitizing cloths, cloths with window cleaner, or ammonium based compounds, etc) may be dried in the dryer. Review MSDS for information that states the compound may be flammable or combustible.
- Ensure regular maintenance of all fire protection devices.
- Make sure all employees receive on-going RPA fire safety training.

Tool:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Dryer</u>	<u>Air Dried</u>
Mops		X
Dish Cloths (Soapy)	X	
Sanitizing Cloths	X	
Oven Cleaning Cloths		X
Lime Removal Cloths	X	
Stainless Steel Cloths		X
Dusting Cloths		X
Bathroom Cloths	X	
Window Cleaner Cloths	X	
Floor Buffer Pads		X
Patient/Resident Clothes	X	
Bed Sheets	X	
Towels and Pads	X	

* Any item used to absorb oil based products should be discarded. This may include rags that are utilized for daily maintenance or necessary to absorb spills. *

Prevention of Spontaneous Combustion:

- Remove items promptly from the dryer at the conclusion of the last cycle (cool down cycle). The cool down cycle is critical to mitigating a fire involving laundered items.
- Lint screens should be washed daily with warm soapy water, then allowed to dry.
- The lint screen should be cleaned after every load.
- Allow time for the laundry to cool before folding, grouping together, or bundling together.
- Clean externally and internally including the area above the drum, vent piping and the area behind the dryers at least monthly to remove any lint build up.

Fire Response:

Staff should utilize the RPA provided “Laundry” specific departmental fire procedures.

