

## GUIDANCE NOTE

# PAINT HANDLING AREAS IN PANEL SHOPS

### PURPOSE

This Guidance Note has been prepared by the Australian Paint Manufacturers' Federation (APMF) to assist panel shop operators in regard to the appropriate storage and handling of Dangerous Goods in Paint Handling Areas.

### BACKGROUND

The safe handling of Dangerous Goods is regulated by State and Territory legislation. This legislation places an obligation on employers to store, handle and use Dangerous Goods in a safe manner, without risk to health.

Examples of equipment frequently found in Paint Mix Areas include non-intrinsically safe computers, weigh scales and microfiche readers. These are potential ignition sources for flammable vapours which are generated through normal activity in a Paint Mix Area. Without proper safeguards or controls, there is a risk of fire and/or explosion occurring.

Unsafe work practices such as smoking within areas where Dangerous Goods are stored or used places employees and plant at risk and should not be allowed. Use of mobile phones and other electronic equipment also poses the same risks as described above.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

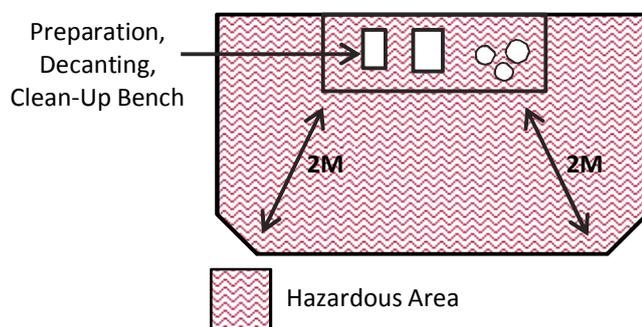
The following recommendations are for quantities of paints/tinters below 1,000 litres and thinners below 250 litres. Where either of these quantities are exceeded, refer to the Dangerous Goods legislation in your State to determine if additional duties are required.

- 1 **Designate** a "Paint Mix Area" similar to the one illustrated in Figure 1. This area should be well-ventilated and can either be a room or an open area in the panel shop. It would normally be used for preparation, decanting and clean-up operations. The area within **two metres** of these operations is classified as a **hazardous area**.
- 2 **Eliminate** all ignition sources from the designated "Paint Mix Area". Ignition sources include stoves, heaters, welders, power points, lights, switches, weigh scales, computers, microfiches, mechanical paint mixing racks, mobile phones, etc. Ignition sources may either be moved outside the **hazardous area** (see Figure 1), or appropriate electrical wiring/equipment installed (Zone 2 Compliant).

- 3 **Designate** a "Paint Weighing Area" dedicated to the weighing of paints/tinters as illustrated in Figure 2. Only that paint which is required for **immediate** use is to be brought into this area. Storage of paints/tinters, thinners and waste paints is **not** permitted in this area. Storage must be at least **two metres** away from all ignition sources.
- 4 **Close** packages when they are not in use to reduce evaporation of solvents.
- 5 **Provide** information, instruction, training and supervision for employees on the hazards and safe handling requirements for the paints/tinters and thinners. Refer to the relevant material safety data sheets on the safe use of products.
- 6 **Provide** adequate spill absorption material for cleaning up of spills (refer to the Safety Data Sheet).
- 7 **Clean** up any spills immediately. Dispose of materials used in an appropriate manner.
- 8 **Post** appropriate signs around the designated Paint Mix Area. An example of a sign may include, "**DANGER – FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS NO SMOKING OR IGNITION SOURCES IN THIS AREA**".
- 9 **Install** a fire extinguisher of dry chemical or foam type adjacent to the designated Paint Weighing Area.

## FIGURES

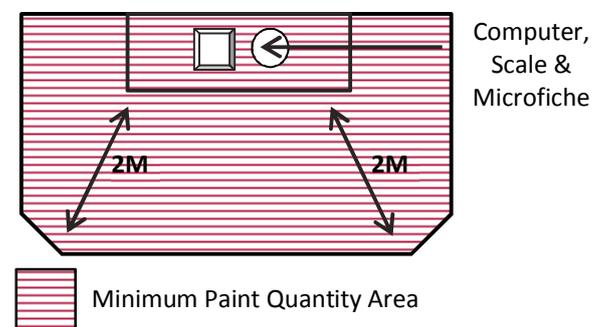
**Figure 1 – PAINT MIX AREA**



**Designated Paint Mix Area**  
marked by zig-zagged area

Electrical equipment must not be located in this area because of the presence of paints or thinners.

**Figure 2 – PAINT WEIGHING AREA**



**Designated Weighing Area**  
marked by striped area

Keep paint volume to a minimum because of the electrical equipment located in this area. Do not store paint or thinners in this area.

## REFERENCES

- Australian Standard AS 1940-2004 "The Storage and Handling of Flammable and Combustible Liquids".
- Australia/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2430.3.9.2004 "Classification of Hazardous Areas".
- National Standard [NOHSC:1015(2001)] "Storage and Handling of Workplace Dangerous Goods".
- Code of Practice for the Storage and Handling of Dangerous Goods (Victoria).