

Safety pallet storage



Delivery pallets are common within industries like retail, manufacturing and contracting. They're great tools for moving heavy stacks of products and materials around with ease. But what happens when the pallets are empty and idle?

DID YOU KNOW

- A pallet's slat design makes it easy for a fire to breathe and hard for an extinguisher to put that fire out.
- Wood pallets were involved in 91% of pallet-related claims.*
- 65% of pallet-related losses occurred in outside storage.*
- Sprinkler systems didn't reduce the severity in 43% of indoor pallet fires.*
- A pallet fire inside a metal building with no sprinkler system can deform the steel, causing a total loss of the building.
- You can help protect your business by safely storing idle pallets of all types (wood, plastic and FM/UL approved).

**FM Global, 2015 report of idle pallet storage losses 2002 to 2012*

PALLET STORAGE TIPS (in accordance with idle pallet storage NFPA 13 20.14)

Interior, by pallet type

Wood pallets in sprinklered areas designed to OH-2 criteria:

- Make sure piles are no more than six-feet high.
- Keep stacks to a maximum of four with a contiguous clearance of at least eight feet or 25 feet to commodity storage.
- Document the storage of pallets with pictures, height of piles, number of piles in an area, and the distance between piles.

Plastic pallets in high-temp sprinklered areas designed to OH-2 criteria:

- Make sure piles are no more than four-feet high.
- Keep stacks to a maximum of two with a contiguous clearance of at least eight feet or 25 feet to commodity storage.
- Document the type of plastic pallet (FM- or UL-rated pallets are treated the same as wood).

The information contained in this service bulletin was obtained from reliable sources. However, United Fire Group accepts no legal responsibility for the correctness or completeness of this information.

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Exterior, no matter the pallet type

- Keep stacks stable and no higher than 15 feet.
- Piles should not cover more than 400 square feet (that's a 5x5 stack of 48-inch pallets).
- Make sure piles are at least eight feet apart.
- Unless local fire code requires greater distance, piles should remain eight feet from any property line.

Clearance between exterior idle pallet storage and other yard storage:

Number of pallets	Clearance in feet
< 50	20
50 to 200	30
> 200	50

Clearance between outside idle pallet storage and building:

Construction	< 50	50 to 200	> 200
Masonry (no openings)	0 feet	0 feet	0 feet
Wood / metal, etc. with AS*	10 feet	20 feet	30 feet
Wood / metal, etc. without AS*	20 feet	30 feet	50 feet

* automatic sprinkler system

- Exterior plastic storage should require distance to be increased by 100%
- Height of storage should not allow burning pallets to fall on roof.

Sources: NFPA 13 "Installation of Sprinkler Systems" 2019 Edition. NFPA 1 "Fire Code" 2018 Edition. FM Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 8-24 – 2015 Revision.

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