



## Teacher burned when solvent in parts washer catches fire

A shop teacher, working alone, was using a parts washer to clean a lawn mower part. The parts washer was designed to hold only a water-based cleaning solution. However, it was filled with a petroleum-based combustible solvent instead. The washer's drain became plugged, which resulted in a low level of solvent in the reservoir. The low solvent level allowed the immersion heating element to become exposed. The solvent overheated and burst into flame, causing an explosion. The teacher – who was not wearing any personal protective equipment – fought the fire with a chemical extinguisher, but his shirt caught fire. He suffered first-degree burns.

### Safe work practices:

- Establish and enforce safe work procedures for using parts washers, including the following:
  - Use only the cleaning solutions recommended by the manufacturer.
  - Wear the appropriate eye, face, and hand/forearm protection.
  - Follow the manufacturer's safety and operating instructions.
  - Ensure that the fusible link on the lid is intact.
- Ensure that material safety data sheets (MSDSs) are readily available for all hazardous and flammable substances used in the workplace.
- Follow all warning labels posted on equipment or machinery.
- Provide workers with the information, training, and supervision necessary to ensure their safety when using equipment.

