



R B F & R S

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STORE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES SAFELY THIS SHED WEEK

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is supporting National Shed Week (6-11 July) by reminding people to be careful what they store in their sheds and other outbuildings. National Shed Week is an initiative run by www.readersheds.co.uk, during which celebrity judges including Chris Evans and Sarah Beeny will pick the 'Shed of the Year 2009' from pictures of sheds sent in by the public.

Many people keep substances such as paint, petrol and gas cylinders, including LPG and acetylene, in their sheds and outbuildings without realising the potential dangers. In the event of a fire, these substances can explode, posing a serious risk to life and property. Acetylene cylinders (commonly used in welding) are the most hazardous of all and the risk of acetylene exploding remains for up to 24 hours after the fire has been extinguished.

Reduce the risk of a fire in your shed or outbuilding by following these simple tips:

- Make sure hazardous substances are stored securely in approved containers.
- Only store what you need to use – dispose of any unwanted chemicals correctly and return empty cylinders to the manufacturer (details are on the shoulders of the cylinder).
- Reduce the risk of deliberate fire and theft by keeping your shed or outbuilding in a good state of repair and secure. Consider directing a security light onto it as a deterrent.
- Take care with electrical items such as TVs and radios – look out for signs of dangerous or loose wiring and never overload sockets. Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Never put a barbecue into a shed while it is still hot as it can easily cause a fire.

Gene Ashe, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, said: "Sheds and outbuildings provide extremely useful storage space but it is essential to make sure that hazardous substances are stored safely and securely. Sheds can also be a target for theft and deliberate fire but you can reduce the risk by keeping them locked and well maintained.

"If you are buying or building a new shed or outbuilding, make sure you site it as far away from your house as possible to minimise the risk of fire spreading in the event of an emergency."

ENDS.