

## Parts Washing Tanks: A Safety Checklist

A common piece of equipment in most shops is a cleaning tank which uses solvents to clean parts and tools. Many hazards are associated with this equipment, but it often receives little attention when it comes to maintenance and safety.

**Splash Hazards:** Cleaning tank chemicals may be splashed onto employees or surrounding surfaces. Be sure there are clean face shields or goggles, chemical resistant aprons and gloves to protect against skin contact and absorption of chemicals. These items must be located near the cleaning tank. An eyewash station, with no obstructions en route, should also be nearby and ready for emergency use.

**Fire Hazards:** All cleaning tanks should have a functioning lid with a fusible link retractor. If your tank is missing this link, one can be ordered from a parts catalog. In the case of fire the fusible link will melt and separate, causing the lid to close automatically, which will usually smother the fire. A properly rated fire extinguisher should be mounted nearby for easy access. Only an approved solvent should be used in the tank. These solvents are considered combustible rather than flammable, as the flash point is approximately 100° F. Never use gasoline as a cleaning solvent (the flash point is -45° F)! All sources of ignition must be kept away from the area. No smoking should be allowed near the combustible solvents used in parts washing tanks! When not in use, the tank lid should be closed.

**Housekeeping:** As with any work area it is very important to keep the immediate area clean and free of obstacles. Cleaning solutions in the tank should be changed as necessary to avoid cross contamination of other chemicals which may have dissolved from parts being cleaned. Dispose of used chemical solutions according to local and/or state environmental regulations.

**Adequate Lighting Tanks** are sometimes located on a back wall or corner of a shop. As with any work station, this area should be well lit to reduce the chance of a mishap.

### Cleaning Tank Safety Checklist:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Retractable Lid Mechanisms          | <input type="checkbox"/> Eye Wash Station       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fusible Ink                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Extinguisher      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work Light                          | <input type="checkbox"/> No Smoking Signs       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Face Shield, Gloves and Apron       | <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate Ventilation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch for Leaks – Take Care of Them | <input type="checkbox"/> Stoddard Solvents Used |

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