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For Immediate Release

Garage and Shop Fire Safety Stressed

A recent structure fire in Alaska that injured the occupant could have been a fire fatality. The fire flashed while the occupant was cleaning parts with gasoline in his shop.

State Fire Marshal David Tyler reminds Alaskans that gasoline should never be used as a cleaner and must always be stored in a proper container away from structures. "Gasoline gives off volatile vapors that can easily ignite by a small spark or flame", states Tyler. That small spark can come from power tools, light switches, grinders, or simply striking two pieces of metal together. Many garages also house the furnace or boiler system and the hot water tank. These appliances usually have an open flame pilot light that can easily ignite gasoline vapors.

By following these simple safety tips, your garage or shop can be a safe place to work:

- Use solvents specifically designed for cleaning parts
- Keep garage or shop clean and free of clutter
- Store flammable liquids away from heat sources and preferably in a flammable liquid locker
- Store gasoline in approved containers outside or in a separate secure shed away from your home
- Store oily and solvent-soaked rags in a tightly sealed metal container or hang them outside to dry before discarding
- Let gas powered equipment cool before refilling gas tank and always refuel outdoors
- If you spill gasoline on clothing, let it dry outdoors before laundering
- Never smoke while handling gasoline or solvents
- Do not run gasoline engines in the garage or shop without proper ventilation
- Check all electrical cords and tools for damage and replace if necessary
- Do not overload outlets
- Install GFI/AFI outlets
- Install and maintain ABC fire extinguishers near exits

Tyler also reminds Alaskans "Residential fire suppression sprinkler systems in conjunction with working smoke alarms can protect you and your loved ones from the ravages of fire."

For more information contact Mahlon Greene, Public Education Coordinator for the Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety (907) 746-5062

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