



# FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

## Washing procedures for towels used in the hospitality industry

This provides guidance following an investigation carried out by North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service into a fire in a commercial laundry following which involved towels laundered on behalf of a restaurant.

An investigation carried out by North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service found that towels from a local restaurant had been placed in a 30 to 40 minute, 40oc wash cycle, before being placed in a commercial dryer. The towels were then folded and left on a bench in readiness for use the next day.

More than five hours after the towels went through the drying process the chemicals within the towels self heated, causing the towels to catch fire. This resulted in damage to the commercial laundrette.

The investigation concluded:-

- The towels had not been washed at a high enough temperature, in order to remove the chemicals/oils efficiently.
- When removed from the dryer the towels were folded immediately therefore the heat was contained within the towels.
- Once folded they were stacked on top of each other allowing no ventilation or air flow, the towels did not cool and were able to self-heat and smoulder.

Businesses are encouraged to wash their towels on a wash cycle at temperatures above 90oc, in order to remove any chemicals and oils effectively.

This simple method, once implemented could make a massive difference. We hope businesses take this advice on board to minimise the risk of a fire occurring.

If you have any enquiries please your local fire safety department.



For more information on fire safety, visit:  
[www.northyorksfire.gov.uk](http://www.northyorksfire.gov.uk)

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