

## Avoid Fires from Massage Oils

Massage oils can cause fires. Sheets and towels saturated in oils can spontaneously combust in your dryer or storage, even after they've been washed.

Use caution when drying or storing linens exposed to oils and consult your dryer manufacturer's guidelines for drying and storing linens exposed to oils.

### Flashpoints of common essential oils

Many common essential oils are classified as a Class 3 Flammable Liquid and have a flash point of 122-140° F. These include tea tree, lavender and citrus oils.

Other popular oils have flashpoints between 102-130° F, including orange, tangerine, rosemary, bergamot, chamomile, eucalyptus, fir, frankincense, juniper berry, grapefruit, lemon, lime and spruce.

By comparison, the flashpoint of kerosene is between 100-162° F.

### How to properly wash and dry oil-soaked linens

Wash linens and towels with oils at a temperature of at least 104° F. At lower temperatures, the oils may not sufficiently combine with the detergent to break down and wash away. Washing at lower temperatures increases the risk of fire in the dryer.

Most dryers on low heat run at around 125° F. On medium to high heat, the dryer runs at 135° F. This means the potential for ignition exists because the oil's flashpoint is low enough and the heat of the dryer is high enough.

To properly handle oil-soaked linens:

- Process soiled linens immediately and do not store for extended periods of time.
- If you must store linens prior to washing, store them outside and away from other combustibles, preferably in a metal container with a metal self-closing lid.
- Most spontaneous ignitions occur in washed and dried linens containing residual material.
- Completely wash the linens at a high temperature of at least 104° F prior to drying.
- Avoid large stacks or piles of linens. Separate them into smaller piles.
- Dry the linens on low heat (below 125° F) to avoid the oil's flashpoint.
- If you must stack linens, spread them to allow for ventilation and cooling.
- Clean the lint traps in your dryer after each use and vent ductwork often (at least 4 times per year). Post a sign to remind employees to clean lint traps after every use.

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A fitness center's fire started when sheets containing massage oils were placed in a dryer. The fire closed the business for more than six months and caused approximately \$1 million in damages.



Sources: <https://escentualweb.com/essential-oils-laundry-safety/>  
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