

**MEDIA RELEASE
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Protect stock from fire this Christmas

As the retail industry looks forward to bumper sales and increased profits over the Christmas and New Year period, store owners are filling their shelves and warehouses with increased levels of stock. While the risk of fire may not be top of mind, retailers are being warned to check their stock is stored safely, that fire equipment is accessible, and sprinkler systems and fire exits are clear to help avoid a fire disaster.

According to Kerry White from fire protection specialist Wormald, "During the busy holiday trading season we see many retailers overstocking their storage systems. In doing so, they risk blocking or baffling their sprinkler systems. In the event of a fire, sprinklers can't function properly and the retailer then risks losing everything. We are urging store owners and managers to undertake a fire safety audit of their premises in the lead up to Christmas to reduce potential fire hazards."

Fire costs New Zealand an average of \$50million¹ per year in commercial property damage alone. This excludes the costs associated with loss of output due to damage, as well as direct or indirect injury costs. Fire can impact businesses with significant costs resulting from personal injuries, damage to stock and property and lengthy downtime.

"Fire extinguishers must be checked each year to ensure they have enough pressure and are working correctly. Fire hoses also need to be checked for the likes of corrosion and cracks. Remember, insurance premiums may be affected if fire systems aren't working properly and losses may not be covered if legally required equipment is found to be lacking," he continued.

Wormald recommends the following to store owners and managers to help reduce the risk of a fire, particularly in the lead-up to the busy holiday trading season:

- Check your storage areas to ensure excess boxes are not baffling the sprinkler system.
- Ensure you have appropriate fire safety equipment for certain stock or new stock items that may require a different fire extinguisher. For example, some hazardous materials require CO2 fire extinguishers rather than dry powder extinguishers.
- Ensure fire safety equipment is maintained and serviced. Fire extinguishers and hose reels should be tested each year. Check the yellow tag (Nzs4503) around the neck of the fire extinguisher and around a fixed location of hose reels to check when they were last serviced.

¹ The Cost of Managing the Risk of Fire in New Zealand: Report by BERL for The New Zealand Fire Service Commission 2005

- Make sure floor stock is not blocking fire exits and access to fire alarm manual call points, fire extinguishers and hose reels are easily accessible.
- Take a walk around the store to ensure all fire exit signs are clearly visible and that fire doors can be opened and not blocked with excess stock or worse still, barred or locked.
- Train staff on the use of fire equipment and procedures. With many retailers employing casual staff over the holiday trading season, it is important to ensure all staff are trained on how to use fire safety equipment and that they know what to do in the event of a fire emergency.

Most fires are preventable and many can be contained if the right fire safety solutions are in place and people are trained to respond appropriately. Wormald provides a wide range of fire safety products from portable fire equipment to large scale fire detection and suppression systems for the retail and commercial sectors. Wormald also offers a number of fire safety training courses ranging from the use of fire extinguishers to comprehensive warden training. For more information on Wormald products and services, call 08004 WORMALD or visit www.wormald.co.nz.

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About Wormald

Wormald is a leading provider of fire protection solutions, protecting people and property since 1889. Wormald designs, manufactures, installs and services fire detection and protection equipment for a wide variety of industries including building and construction, mining, healthcare, defence, oil & gas, leisure management, corporate, education and IT&T. Wormald also provides a comprehensive range of fire services from engineering advice to fire safety training. www.wormald.co.nz

About Tyco Fire Protection Services

Tyco Fire Protection Services (TFPS) is a business segment of Tyco International Ltd. Its major brands include Wormald, Vigilant, Simplex Time Solutions, Exelgard and GAAM Emergency Products. TFPS employs approximately 1,500 personnel in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji and its products are used to detect and suppress fires, safeguard firefighters and protect people and property.