EC HIGHLIGHTS
Fire Sprinklers & Storage: What you need to know

Who makes the rules?
- City of Portland Fire and Rescue
- State of Oregon Fire Marshal
- Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services *(Healthcare only)*
- The Joint Commission *(Healthcare only)*

OHSU Fire Code Expert: Environmental Health and Radiation Safety 503.494.7795

Sprinkler examples:
- **18” Rule**
  - Maintain 18” clearance from sprinkler.
  - Shelving/casework attached walls are allowed to extend past the 18” plane as long as the sprinkler head is not directly above the shelving/casework. Store only infrequently used and less combustible items on a top shelf for fire safety and ergonomic reasons.
  - In aisles (e.g., libraries and laboratories), shelving/casework are allowed to extend to the ceiling as long as sprinklers are installed in every aisle no less than 12 feet apart.
  - **Rationale:** Items within close proximity to a sprinkler head will block water flow from the sprinkler rendering it ineffective.

For areas WITH sprinklers:
- Maintain 24” of clearance from the ceiling.
- Shelving/casework attached to a wall that extends past the 24” plane is NOT allowed.
- Shelving/casework (and contents) that are freestanding must have 24” clearance to the ceiling.
- **Rationale:** In the event of a fire, firefighters use the ceiling to deflect water from the fire hose to the other side of the area/room. This allows the firefighters to remain further away from the smoke/fire.

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