

U.S. Fire Administration / National Fire Academy

Coffee Break Training

Topic: Weather Protection Construction

Learning objective: The student shall be able to identify the conditions that create covered storage areas that are not classified as “indoor storage.”

Property owners and occupants may elect to move hazardous materials outdoors to avoid the code limits and requirements for “indoor storage.” Generally, the requirements for outdoor storage are less restrictive.

If products and containers need to be protected from the weather, the owner/occupant may want to provide weather protection in the form of some sort of enclosure. What conditions create covered storage areas that are not classified as “indoor storage?”

1. Structural supports and walls may not obstruct more than one side, or more than 25 percent of the perimeter of the storage area.
2. The distance from the structure and structure’s support to buildings, lot lines, public ways, or means of egress to a public way shall be at least the same as the distance requirements for outdoor hazardous materials storage.



With two enclosed sides, this example should be classified as “indoor storage.”

The International codes require the overhead structure to be noncombustible and limits the size to 1,500 square feet.

The NFPA Uniform Fire Code™ allows reducing separation distances if the weather protection is noncombustible and fire barrier walls are employed.

If outdoor weather protection is provided for explosive or detonatable materials, the arrangement still is regulated as “indoor storage.”

For additional information, refer to NFPA 1, Uniform Fire Code™, Chapter 60; International Fire Code®, Chapter 27; and International Building Code®, Chapter 4.