

Toolbox Talks

Fire Prevention During “Hot Work” Operations

“Hot work” is any operation that generates flame, slag, or sparks. It includes welding, burning, cutting, torch heating and portable grinding operations. Failure to exercise proper safety precautions during such work can result in sudden fires or explosions that threaten personnel. Unsafe hot work can also result in serious fires that break out minutes or even hours after the work is completed.

Things to consider before conducting Hot Work:

- ✓ Is the work area a “Designated Hot Work Area” identified by management and always maintained free of combustible material?
- ✓ If the work will not be performed in a Designated Hot Work Area, then a “Hot Work Permit” will need to be completed first.
- ✓ Any combustible material within 35’ of the work area must be removed, protected by fire resistant tarps/felts, or protected by wetting.
- ✓ Is there a hazard of flammable gases or vapors in the work area? These can come from fuels, oils, solvents, aerosol cans, or torch hose leaks.
- ✓ Are there any floor openings, cracks, or drains that need to be protected from falling slag and sparks?
- ✓ Will the work conduct heat to any combustible materials nearby?
- ✓ Is a properly maintained and inspected fire extinguisher readily available?
- ✓ Will a “Fire Watcher” be required for the job? Situations requiring a



Fire Watcher are:

- Conditions under which more than a minor fire could develop. (Combustible storage or building construction)
- Combustible material within 35’.
- Easily ignited material (paper, straw, sawdust) more than 35’ away but in the room or area.
- Wall or floor cracks/openings within 35’.
- Combustible material near the work piece that could ignite from conducted heat.

