

TOOLBOX TALK: FIRE AND HOT WORK

Job or site _____

Date _____

Led by _____

Open with this

Who is welding, cutting, soldering, torching or grinding today? That is hot work. Before any of it starts, we walk the area and we agree who is watching it afterward.

The talk

Hot work is anything that makes sparks, flame or enough heat to ignite something: welding, torch cutting, abrasive cutting, soldering, brazing, heat guns and roofing torches.

Sparks travel further than anybody expects. Thirty five feet is the standard clearance around hot work, and sparks roll, bounce and fall through gaps. Move combustibles out of that radius or cover them with a rated blanket, and close up openings in floors and walls within it.

The killer detail is concealed spaces. A spark that drops into a stud bay, a chase, a soffit or under a roof deck smolders for hours in insulation or sawdust and then breaks out at nine in the evening. That is why the fire watch continues after the tool is off.

Keep the fire watch in place for at least thirty minutes after the last spark, with an extinguisher in hand and eyes on the area, including the far side of any wall or floor that was worked on. Most jobsite hot work permits follow NFPA 51B on this and some require sixty minutes.

Extinguishers. Know where they are, know what class they are, and know they were checked. The rule of thumb is one within one hundred feet of travel for each three thousand square feet of protected area, and any hot work has one within reach, not down two floors.

Fuel and gas. Cylinders stored upright and secured, caps on when not in use, oxygen kept twenty feet from fuel gas or separated by a rated barrier, gasoline in approved safety cans only, and nothing refueled while hot or running.

And the last one, the exit. If a fire starts, everybody needs to know where they are going. Exits and routes stay clear, which is another reason housekeeping is a fire talk as much as a trip talk.

Point at these before anybody starts

- What hot work is happening today and exactly where

- The 35 foot radius around it, and every combustible inside that radius
- Openings, cracks, chases and stud bays sparks could fall into
- The extinguisher, its class, its gauge and its inspection tag
- Who is the fire watch, and how long they stay after the work stops
- Fuel and gas cylinder storage, secured, upright and separated

The rules that apply

- Move combustibles at least 35 feet from hot work, or shield them with a rated fire blanket.
- Cover or close openings, cracks and chases where sparks could fall into a concealed space.
- A fire watch stays in place during the work and for at least 30 minutes after the last spark, on both sides of any wall or floor worked on.
- An appropriate extinguisher stays within immediate reach of the hot work, checked and in date.
- Store compressed gas cylinders upright and secured with caps on, oxygen separated from fuel gas by 20 feet or a rated barrier.
- Gasoline only in approved safety cans, and no refueling of hot or running equipment.

Ask the crew

- Where exactly are the sparks going to land today?
- Who is the fire watch, and what time can they leave?
- If there is a fire in this building right now, where does everybody go?

Close with this

Thirty five feet clear, openings covered, extinguisher in reach, and the fire watch stays half an hour after the last spark.

Attendance

Everybody who was present signs, including subcontractors and anybody visiting the site.

	Print name and signature
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This talk is general safety information for a crew briefing, not legal advice and not a substitute for the training your employees are required to have. Standards are quoted for orientation only. Check the current text of the standard and your own state plan, which may be stricter than the federal rule.