

## Toolbox Talk – Hot Work Programs

The health and safety of our associates is paramount, and we all have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace. As such we all have the right and a duty to stop unsafe acts if we see them, we should not allow our colleagues or visitors to work in unsafe conditions or scenarios.

Today I want to talk specifically about the hazards of hot work. Hot work is defined as any operation that involves open flames or produces heat or sparks, e.g. cutting, grinding, brazing, soldering, welding, chipping, or hot riveting.

Inadequately controlled hot work is a major cause of fire. Hot slag from a welding torch can easily ignite combustibles **within** 35-ft. (11-m) away from the work area, and the resulting fire can grow undetected.

Taking suitable precautions would seem to be the obvious solution. However, it is human nature to cut corners, therefore it is important to effectively manage this risk that we follow policy and best practices.

The main concern is when hot work is performed outside of designated safe areas. Contractors are of particular concern because they are unfamiliar with buildings and processes and are often unsupervised. Any hot work conducted outside of these dedicated areas should be monitored with a hot work permit.

When hot work needs to be routinely performed in non-dedicated areas, as is sometimes the case with new construction **or renovation** projects, an acceptable alternative to using a permit is to temporarily classify an area as a dedicated hot work area. In these areas, safety requirements should exceed what is required for permitted hot work, particularly with respect to the 35-ft (11-m) rule. These areas should be inspected routinely to ensure compliance. A prudent inspection frequency should be established in each case. Hot work should not be permitted in the event of noncompliance.

If you have concerns about your safety or the safety of others, report those concerns to a supervisor, manager, EHS, Human Resources, Legal and Compliance, or call RPM's hotline.