

Hot Work Controls

The use of open flame and spark producing devices for welding, cutting, and similar “hot work” applications is common and necessary in our present society. When properly controlled, we all benefit from the use of this equipment. When not controlled, property damage and personal injury often occurs. Management should set policy to confine cutting, welding and other hot work to properly arranged maintenance rooms unless the work cannot be moved there. A written permit system should be implemented for all hot work conducted outside of maintenance rooms especially in areas where flammable or combustible materials are used or stored.

1. **Responsibilities.** Before approving any cutting and welding, the supervisor or his appointee shall inspect the work area and confirm that precautions have been taken to prevent fire in accordance with NFPA No. 51B.
2. **Precautions**
 - Employees trained.
 - Automatic sprinklers in service, alarms operational.
 - Cutting and welding equipment in good repair.
 - Fire extinguisher nearby.
 - Hand, eye, and other protective equipment provided and used.
3. **Within 35 feet of work**
 - Floors swept clean of combustibles.
 - Combustible floors wet down, covered with damp sand, metal or other noncombustible shields.
 - No combustible material or flammable liquids in work area.
 - Combustibles and flammable liquid removed or protected with noncombustible covers, guards or metal shields.
 - All wall and floor openings covered.
 - Noncombustible covers suspended beneath work to collect sparks.
4. **Work on walls or ceilings**
 - Construction noncombustibles and without combustible covering or finish.
 - Combustibles moved away from opposite side of wall.
5. **Work on enclosed equipment (tanks, containers, ducts, dust collectors, etc.)**
 - Equipment cleaned of all combustibles.
 - Containers purged of flammable vapors.
6. **Fire watch**
 - To be provided during and 30 minutes after operation.
 - Supplied with extinguisher and small hose.
 - Trained in use of equipment.
 - Facilities for summoning fire department.
7. **Final check-up.** To be made 30 minutes after completion of any operation unless fire watch is provided.

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