Toolbox talk

Fire and hot works

Stop fires before they start

10 minutes

For: Everyone on site, especially anyone welding, cutting, grinding or using a torch

Why it matters

Hot works cause many construction site fires, especially on refurbishment jobs. Sparks can smoulder unseen for a long time and then flare up after everyone has gone home.

Key points

1. Hot works include welding, cutting, grinding, brazing and any work with a naked flame or torch.
2. First ask: can it be done cold instead, for example by bolting, crimping or a cold-cut saw?
3. If hot works are needed, get a hot works permit before you start.
4. Clear or protect anything that can burn around the work area, including behind walls and below floors.
5. Have the right fire extinguishers at the work area, and know how to use them.
6. Keep a fire watch during the work and afterwards, for as long as the permit says.
7. Store gas cylinders upright and secured, away from heat, and turn them off at the cylinder after use.
8. Keep escape routes clear and know where the fire alarm and assembly point are.

Sources: HSE: Fire safety in construction (HSG168); HSE: Process fire risks in construction; CITB: Managing hot work (GE700).

This talk supports, but does not replace, your site-specific risk assessment, method statement, training and supervision. Free to copy and use. **tradefoxapp.com/toolbox-talks/fire-hot-works**

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Do

- Check the permit conditions and follow them exactly.
- Use fire blankets and screens to contain sparks.
- Check the area, including hidden spaces, before you leave.
- Keep rubbish and flammable materials to a minimum.
- Raise the alarm early if you see smoke or fire.

Don't

- Don't start hot works without a permit where one is required.
- Don't leave the area as soon as you finish. Keep the fire watch.
- Don't block fire exits, extinguishers or alarm points.
- Don't take gas cylinders into site huts or store them indoors.
- Don't tackle a fire unless you're trained and it's safe to do so.

Ask the group

- Where are the nearest extinguishers and the fire alarm point?
- Could any of our hot works be done cold instead?
- How long is the fire watch on our permits?
- Where is our assembly point?

If it goes wrong: If there's a fire, raise the alarm and call 999. Only use an extinguisher if you're trained, it's safe, and you have a clear way out. Go to the assembly point and don't go back in.

On this site

Nearest first aider _____

Emergency assembly point _____

Site-specific hazards and controls _____

_____

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Go further: Fire safety in construction: hot works, escape routes and site controls

Sources: HSE: Fire safety in construction (HSG168); HSE: Process fire risks in construction; CITB: Managing hot work (GE700).

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Attendance register

Fire and hot works

Site / project _____ Date and time _____

Presented by _____ Company _____

	Name (print)	Company	Signature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

By signing, attendees confirm they took part in this toolbox talk and understood the key points. Keep this record with your site safety file.

Presenter signature _____ Follow-up actions _____

Quick check

Fire and hot works

Tick one answer for each question. Your presenter has the answers.

Name _____ Date _____

1. What should you ask first before hot works?

- [ ] Where's the extinguisher?
- [ ] Can it be done cold instead?
- [ ] Who's on fire watch?

2. When can you leave after finishing hot works?

- [ ] Straight away
- [ ] After the fire watch set by the permit
- [ ] At the end of the day

3. How should gas cylinders be stored?

- [ ] Lying down in the site hut
- [ ] Upright, secured and away from heat
- [ ] Anywhere out of the way

4. What should you do with combustibles near the work?

- [ ] Nothing
- [ ] Remove them or protect them
- [ ] Spray them with water

5. You see smoke. What's the first thing to do?

- [ ] Finish your task
- [ ] Raise the alarm
- [ ] Go and look for the fire

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For the presenter

Answers and sources

Quick check answers

1. Can it be done cold instead?

The safest hot work is the one you avoid. Cold methods remove the fire risk altogether.

2. After the fire watch set by the permit

Sparks can smoulder unseen. The fire watch continues after the work for the time the permit sets.

3. Upright, secured and away from heat

Cylinders should be stored upright and secured, outdoors and away from heat sources.

4. Remove them or protect them

Clear or protect anything that can burn, including hidden spaces behind walls and under floors.

5. Raise the alarm

Raise the alarm early so everyone can get out and the fire service is called.

Sources

- HSE: Fire safety in construction (HSG168)
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg168.htm
- HSE: Process fire risks in construction
  https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/processfire.htm
- CITB: Managing hot work (GE700)
  https://www.citb.co.uk/media/32yofvcd/managing-hot-work.pdf

> **Presenting tips:** keep it to about 10 minutes, use real examples from your site, ask the group questions rather than reading everything out, and record attendance on the register.

No permit. No hot works.

1. Clear combustibles first
2. Extinguisher at the work area
3. Keep the fire watch afterwards

Fire and hot works toolbox talk

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No permit. No hot works.

1. **Clear combustibles first**
2. **Extinguisher at the work area**
3. **Keep the fire watch afterwards**

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Sources and qualifications

Fire and hot works

Scope: Great Britain safety legislation unless a nation is identified. Northern Ireland has separate legislation. Site rules can be stricter than minimum legal duties; use the site assessment, instructions and competent supervision.

A4 applicability: no installation-design requirement is asserted in this talk. Its claims are referenced to the subject-specific sources below.

S1. HSE HSG168: Fire safety in construction

Fire prevention, hot work, combustibles, cylinders, fire watch, escape and alarm arrangements; talk sheet and quiz.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg168.htm

S2. HSE: Process fire risks

Avoiding hot work, permit controls, shielding and post-work checks; Do/Don't and poster. A permit requirement may also be a site/insurer rule.

https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/processfire.htm

Presenter qualification: Follow the permit/insurer fire-watch duration and any subsequent rechecks; this talk gives no universal number of minutes.