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Hot Work Training

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Division -- Billings

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Job Name -- RVU

Foreman -- Stephen Swan

Attendance -- Stephen Swan, Chris Jenkins, Michael Swan, Thomas Achten

Comments:

Last week was National Fire Prevention Week and we touched on how we can prevent fires at home and on the jobsite; this week we are diving deeper into Hot Work and the precautions, paperwork and procedures we must follow to keep everyone and everything safe.

When we say, :hot work,: what comes to mind: (welding, pin welding, burning, cutting, torching, grinding, etc.)

That's right:**hot work is any job that creates sparks, flames, or heat.** This includes pin welding, torch cutting, and even grinding metal. Anytime this type of work is performed, the risk of fire goes way up.

Hot Work Permits

Here's something important: **most jobsites require a Hot Work Permit.** That means before you light a torch, or pin weld, you've got to check with the General Contractor.

Question - Why do you think a hot work permit is required:

It's really about making sure everyone is on the same page. The GC needs to know where sparks and heat-producing work are happening, a fire watch must be in place, and we want to prevent any surprise fires. At the end of the day, the permit is there to protect all of us and keep the entire jobsite safe.

Permits are there to protect everyone, not to slow us down. It's about communication and making sure conditions are safe before we start.

Fire Extinguisher Readiness

Now let's talk about fire extinguishers. If you're doing hot work, **you must have a fire extinguisher within arm's reach.**

How many of us know how to properly inspect a fire extinguisher:

Fire Extinguisher Inspection Checklist

Accessibility : Is the extinguisher easy to see and reach: Not blocked or hidden:

Pressure Gauge : Is the needle in the green zone (fully charged):

Inspection Tag : Has it been checked and signed off monthly:

Hose & Nozzle : No cracks, splits, or blockages:

Pin & Seal : Is the safety pin in place with the tamper seal intact:

Condition : Is the extinguisher free of dents, rust, or leaks:

Weight : Does it feel full (not unusually light):

If anything is wrong, do not use it report it immediately and get a replacement.

How many of us feel confident using a fire extinguisher: If not, don't worry, there's an easy acronym that makes it simple to remember.

Here's the acronym we use: **PASS.**

P : Pull the pin.

A : Aim low at the base of the fire.

S : Squeeze the handle.

S : Sweep side to side until the fire is out.

It's simple, but when adrenaline kicks in, people forget. Practice the steps in your head before you start hot work.

What to Watch For

Other trades: Sparks travel. Somebody grinding overhead can send sparks down into your work area. Always be alert for what's happening around you.

Flammable materials: Before starting, look around: are there cardboard boxes, insulation, solvents, or other combustibles nearby? If yes, move them out of the area.

Escape route: Ask yourself: If a fire gets too big to fight, where do I go? Know your exit path before you strike a spark.

If a Fire Breaks Out

If it's **small and manageable**, use your extinguisher. But if it's bigger than a trash can fire, or if you're unsure : **don't risk it. Get out.** Call for help immediately. Fires and smoke spread faster than most people think.

Remember: we can replace tools and material, but we can't replace lives.

Let's hear your thoughts! Discuss the questions below and drop your answers in the comments section of this Toolbox Talk.

Why do you think it's important to keep a fire extinguisher close when doing hot work:

What's an example of flammable material you've seen left near someone welding or grinding:

If a fire got out of hand, what's your escape path and rally point for this job site:

Remember This!

Hot work is one of the leading causes of construction fires. Permits, extinguishers, and awareness are the three big defenses we have. Stay alert, look out for each other, and never cut corners when it comes to fire safety.