



COMPANY NAME: _____

Volume 47 Issue 6 February 5, 2024

Hot Work Hazards

Hot work includes electric and gas welding, cutting, brazing, soldering, grinding, and similar operations. All hot work uses open flames, or produces sparks, or creates lots of heat, so all hot work creates fire hazards. But hot work brings a variety of other hazards, too. You need to understand all the hazards in order to stay safe. Today we're going to discuss 6 common hot work hazards.

Fires and explosions: Sparks, slag, and molten metal produced during hot work can ignite nearby materials, leading to fires and explosions. Any flammable or combustible dust, gases, or vapors in the air will increase the risk of a fire.

Burns: If you come in direct contact with hot surfaces, flames, or molten metal, you can suffer severe burns. If the PPE you're wearing isn't good enough or if you're not wearing it properly, you increase your chances of severe burns. Wear gloves, safety glasses or goggles, a face shield, and flame-resistant clothing.

Toxic fumes and gases: Hot work creates harmful fumes and gases, especially if the parts you're working on contain hazardous materials. Those fumes and gases can cause severe or deadly respiratory problems. You might not know about the problems for years. Wear the right respirator now.

Noise: Welding, cutting, and grinding can generate very high noise levels. Over time, that loud noise can lead to permanent hearing loss. Always wear hearing protection so you can hear your children and grandchildren.

Confined spaces: Any hot work in a confined space is especially dangerous. The risks of fire or a dangerous atmosphere are much greater in a confined space.

UV radiation: Arc welding produces very intense light, including ultraviolet radiation which can damage your eyesight. Wear eye protection like welding helmets and safety glasses or goggles.

There's a lot to consider before you start any hot work:

- You may have to fill out a hot work permit before any hot work takes place.
- You'll need a dedicated fire watch to be present during any hot work activity and for at least 30 minutes after the hot work is complete.
- Plan time to inspect the work area. Remove flammables and combustibles. You may need to sweep or wet down the floor.
- Make sure floor and wall openings are covered so sparks can't get to other floors or rooms.
- Lay out fire blankets or shields to prevent fires caused by sparks and molten metal.
- Make sure there's proper ventilation in your work area. If there isn't, wear an appropriate respirator.
- Always keep a fire extinguisher handy.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Have at least one clear evacuation route in case of a fire.

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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Basic First Aid: Controlling Bleeding

No matter how focused you are on working safely, accidents can still happen. Whether you're handling sharp tools, working with heavy machinery, or just cleaning up the site, you or your co-workers could find yourselves with a deep cut, scrape, puncture, or another injury that bleeds a lot. There are 3 easy steps in the ABCs of controlling bleeding. When someone is injured, you can use the ABCs to control bleeding until paramedics arrive.

First, do a safety check. You can't help someone else if you're injured. Before you try to help the injured person, check yourself and the area. Make sure that you aren't injured or in immediate danger. If you're in danger, get to a safe place first. Then, check whether the injured person is still in danger. For instance, if they're caught in a machine, power it down before you begin the ABCs.

Second, protect yourself. Blood can carry diseases, so protect yourself using PPE. Wear disposable gloves and a surgical mask to avoid coming in contact with blood and other body fluids. If you do get blood on you, wash the area and your hands with soap and water, and then tell a medical provider that you've been exposed to the victim's blood.

Now let's go over the **ABCs**:

A is for Alert—Call 911. When the unexpected happens, your first move is crucial. A quick, calm first response should be to immediately call 911. Dial fast, speak clearly, and get medical care on the way. A quick response in an emergency can make the difference between life and

death. Follow all the instructions from the 911 operator. The operator may tell you to find a first-aid kit before you do anything else.

B is for Bleeding—Find the source. Try to find the source and location of the bleeding. There could be more than one wound. Look for areas of continuous bleeding, a large volume of blood, or pooling blood. Clothing and PPE can hide life-threatening injuries, so check under clothes, masks, respirators, and hard hats.

C is for Compress—Apply pressure. Apply direct pressure to the wound, specifically on the location of the bleeding. Use a clean cloth or gauze that will cover the injury. Even if the bleeding seems to stop, keep pressure on the wound until help arrives. If the gauze gets saturated with blood, don't remove it. Just add another piece of cloth or gauze on top of the saturated one.

If applying firm pressure doesn't stop the bleeding, the injury could be large or deep. For these wounds, pressure won't be enough to stop the bleeding. Pack gauze or cloth tightly into the wound until the bleeding stops and then apply pressure until medical help arrives.

Take a first-aid course and learn how to save a life.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Wearing a good pair of cut-resistant gloves helps protect your hands from cuts.

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Prevent Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Construction sites are inherently noisy environments. Almost all of the work we do produces noise: using impact drivers and power saws, operating heavy equipment, running a grinder, using a jackhammer, or simply pounding nails. You have to protect your hearing from the damaging noise on the jobsite.

Understand what’s happening to your ears. Loud noise is more than just a nuisance. It causes physical injuries to your inner ear. There are thousands of tiny hairs in your inner ear that convert sound waves to electrical signals. Those signals are sent to your brain, and it interprets them as sounds. Loud noise damages those hairs, and the damage accumulates over time. Really loud noises can kill or break the hairs instantly. When enough of the hairs don’t work right, you hear nothing at all.

Hearing loss can have significant and lasting effects on your health. It can increase your risk of being injured because you can’t hear back-up alarms or warning signals, or you don’t hear instructions or misunderstand them. Hearing loss increases your risk of anxiety and depression because it’s harder to engage with family and friends. Ringing in the ears, which often comes with hearing loss, can cause stress, anxiety, and sleep problems.

Hearing protection reduces your exposure to harmful noise. Wear hearing protection when noise levels are above 85 decibels. Noisy tools include jackhammers, drills, air chisels, chop saws, chain saws, and more.

Use earplugs or earmuffs. There are disposable and reusable earplugs. Both kinds provide good protection if you wear them properly. Earmuffs provide maximum protection when they make a good seal against your head. And as a bonus, they also keep dirt, sparks, and weld spatter out of your ears. Most importantly, your hearing protection has to fit properly, and you have to wear it, or it won’t protect you at all. Earbuds are not hearing protection.

Follow these safe work practices to protect your hearing:

- Regularly inspect and maintain your hearing protection equipment. Replace damaged, dirty, or worn-out earplugs or earmuffs.
- Limit the amount of time you spend in noisy areas by rotating tasks. Take breaks in quiet places so your ears get a break, too.
- Talk to your supervisor about using engineering controls to reduce noise levels on the jobsite. These can include installing sound barriers, using sound-absorbing materials, using quieter equipment, and isolating work that creates lots of loud noise.
- Get regular hearing checkups to monitor any changes in your hearing and detect potential issues early on. You can’t reverse hearing loss, but you can prevent it from getting any worse.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Turn down the volume on your TV and your earbuds.

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Time to Refuel and Recharge

All of our tools require power from somewhere. Even hand tools require power from our hands. It's just as important to be safe when we're refueling or recharging tools as it is to be safe when we're using them. Make safety a priority when refueling gasoline-powered engines and changing and charging power tool batteries. And don't neglect your body. It needs to be refueled and recharged, too, with water, good food, and rest. A safe jobsite must include both machinery and people working at their best.

Refueling gasoline-powered engines:

- Refuel gas-powered equipment in designated areas away from ignition sources like welding, grinding, or open flames.
- Make sure refueling areas are well-ventilated.
- Keep a fire extinguisher handy in case of a fire.
- Never smoke in or near the refueling area.
- Never carry gas in a glass container or a plastic jug. Use a metal safety can with a self-closing lid and a flash arrestor in the neck.
- Turn the engine off before refueling, and let the engine cool down before you add any fuel.
- Clean the area around the opening to the gas tank so you don't get dirt or sawdust in the tank or the gas can.

Changing and charging power tool batteries:

- After you use a tool, remember to remove the battery and put it in the charger.

- Turn off the tool before changing batteries.
- Keep the cords for battery chargers out of the way so no one trips. Don't let chargers or batteries get wet or rained on.
- Only use chargers that are recommended by the tool manufacturer.
- Inspect chargers and batteries before using them. Dispose of chargers and batteries properly.
- Don't force batteries into tools when they don't fit.
- Store batteries in a cool, dry place.

Refueling and recharging you:

- Take care of your body. Get enough good, restful sleep. Drink more water and less soda and coffee. Work on eating a balanced diet that includes fruits and vegetables.
- Use your breaks to rest and recharge. Do some stretch-and-flex exercises to loosen up muscles and improve your flexibility.
- Recharge your mind. Stress, depression, and anxiety keep your mind from performing at its best. Poor mental performance can lead to accidents. Try meditation or breathing deeply. It really is okay to see a counselor if you need to.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Regular exercise can help improve your overall health, maintain your strength, and reduce stress levels.

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