

Safety Talk: Hot Work



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO



On October 26, 2010, a significant fire broke out in the Math-Stat Building, which was under renovation at the time.

Welding embers and a disregard for following proper hot work procedures were determined to be the cause of the fire.

The fire resulted in extensive damage to the building, increased costs, and major delays in the project.

Additional Considerations:

1. Ensure all equipment is in good working condition prior to using.
2. Propane may not be used for hot work inside occupied University buildings.
3. Perform welding in well-ventilated areas or use a fume extractor.
4. Only when absolutely necessary, properly disable fire detection and suppression systems to prevent accidental activation.

CAUTION

**HOT WORK
PERMIT REQUIRED
IN THIS AREA**

EHS POLICIES FOR REVIEW:

For Hot Work:

- Welding, Cutting, and Brazing Policy

For Detection/Suppression Impairments:

- Fire Detection Systems Policy
- Fixed Fire Suppression Systems Policy

General precautions to follow when performing hot work:

- Remove combustible and flammable items within 35 feet of work;
- Protect non-removable combustible items with fire-resistant blankets or other barriers;
- Cover openings in the wall or floor and protect ventilation system ducts;
- Have properly working fire extinguishers immediately available;
- Work in an area with fire sprinkler coverage;
- Ensure contractors are aware of how to sound an alarm in case of a fire; and
- Conduct a fire watch for at least 30 minutes after completing work.

The 30-minute fire watch ensures that left-over embers do not ignite into a fire.

A longer duration fire watch may be required for more complex or hazardous hot work scenarios.

“Hot Work” is any operation that utilizes open flames or produces heat or sparks.

When possible, avoid hot work by using less hazardous techniques.

The following operations are considered hot work:

- Brazing;
- Open-flame soldering;
- Oxygen cutting;
- Grinding;
- Torch-applied heating/roofing; and
- Welding.

Hot Work Permits are issued by EHS for CPD Projects and FS Supervisors for O&M work

- **Permits must be obtained prior to completing any of the activities above.**

Please provide at least 24 hours notice for a hot work permit request.

Hot work permits are required for both employees and contractors.