

Hot Works Operations #2

Welding, cutting and other hot works operations ignite thousands of structure fires each year in the United States. Carelessly controlled sparks, hot slag, and direct open flame contact can ignite combustibles with dangerous results, especially when occurring in a University or anywhere else where the building population requires assistance in evacuating. To minimize the risk of hot works fires, the model fire codes provide the following guidelines on hot works.

- The supervisor or responsible manager should fill out a permit to control unwanted hot work operations.
- Permits should not be issued to anyone other than those who are trained and qualified.
- Hot works areas should be clear of combustibles including vapors from flammable or combustible liquids or combustible materials should be protected with suitable covers.
- Openings or cracks in walls, floors, ducts or shafts near the hot works operations should be sealed to prevent sparks from reaching combustible building components. Metal fire resistant guards or approved hot works curtains may serve as an alternative.
- Fire protection systems, especially sprinklers, should be maintained in operative condition. Precautions should be taken to prevent fire detection systems from activated due to smoke or welding flames in the area.
- At least one fire extinguisher with a minimum 2-A: 20BC rating should be located with 30 feet of where the hot work is being performed.
- If hose-lines are provided for fire protection, they should be utilized only by trained personnel.
- A fire watch should be provided in the area where the hot works is being conducted. The fire watch should remain for at least 30 minutes after the hot works has been completed to check for hot spots or hidden fires.
- The fire watch should be trained in the use of fire extinguishers and first aid hose-lines.
- Signs warning “CAUTION”: Hot Works in Progress, Stay Clear” should be provided if the hot works area is accessible to anyone other than the person doing the work.