



SITE SAFETY MEETING - TOOL BOX TALK

Fire Hazards on the Job

Fire Hazards are sometimes overlooked on the jobsite because they are a common part of every work day. We regularly use fuels, cleaners, solvents, adhesives, etc. that are flammable and these products alone are usually safe. But when combined with carelessness and lack of taking the proper safety precautions, they can become volatile and very dangerous.

In order to start a fire you need three ingredients: **FUEL** (such as wood, paper, gasoline etc.); **OXYGEN**; and a source of **IGNITION** (such as a spark, match, etc.). Combine the three and you have fire, a dangerous situation that could result in personal injury or death and / or significant property damage.

To avoid fire one of the ingredients must be eliminated. It is difficult to eliminate the **oxygen**, and the **fuel** is usually part of the construction process, so what must be controlled are the sources of **ignition**. A source of ignition is anything that can light a fire. The first thing that comes to mind is a match, but there are other ignition sources such as pilot lights for heaters or stoves, electrical tools and sparks from grinding and cutting tools.

Torches are often used on site by plumbers to sweat pipes and others use torches to cut metal. It's difficult to safely work around wood structure such as a house when using a torch so make sure the proper protection is in place and a fire extinguisher is nearby. A welding flame is another source of ignition and when welding be sure the area is clear of flammable materials and combustible liquids such as gas, kerosene, oil, etc. Also, be sure to use adequate personal protective gear and clothing when working with torches including safety glasses, gloves, shields, etc.

Space heaters are a common hazard if they are used too close to combustible material or surfaces. When using portable heaters make sure they're on a stable, level surface. Areas around heaters should always be clear of materials that could catch fire like paper, wood or waste materials. The area should also be well ventilated to avoid build up of dangerous fumes. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations when using heaters.

Sometimes there can be fire without a spark or match. Spontaneous combustion can start a fire when rags saturated with flammables such as solvents, petroleum or linseed oil, etc. are not disposed of properly. Oil saturated materials can build up enough heat to catch fire without an ignition source. Do not throw them in the regular trash and use an approved receptacle to dispose of rags soaked with flammable liquids.

Smoking on the jobsite is prohibited whenever there is a flammable material being used. These areas should be properly identified with **no smoking** signs but in any case when in doubt do not smoke. Smoking may not be permitted on the jobsite or may only be allowed only in designated areas. Ask your supervisor.

Storage areas for flammable materials must be in accordance with regulations and manufacturers recommendations.

Good house keeping practices are important in fire prevention. Keep work areas clear of waste and unnecessary construction materials. It is also important to have the proper fire extinguisher on the job and to be sure it is regularly inspected.

Always pay attention to your surroundings and how ignition sources are used. Use tools and equipment properly, don't smoke near flammables and keep that fire extinguisher nearby. Together we can protect against fires on the job. We don't want to lose a house – or even worse, one of you because of a fire.

Questions to start discussion

1. What are the three ingredients needed to start a fire?
2. What ingredient is easiest to control to prevent a fire?
3. What are some ignition sources you might find on a jobsite? *On this site?*
4. What can you do to help prevent fires on the jobsite?

Tool Box Talk Source: Base information by National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) TBT

Meeting Notes:

Employee Comments / Concerns: _____

Other Safety issues to be addressed on the job: _____

Training Record: Date: _____ Jobsite: _____ By: _____ Title: _____

Employee Name	Emp #	Signature	Employee Name	Emp #	Signature
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Tool Box Talks are employee safety meetings designed to serve as 15 minute on-site training sessions focused on key topics relative to your work. Site superintendents or foremen are responsible for holding meetings each week usually during a morning break. This important segment of your general safety program encourages open discussion on the topic of the week and allows employees to share their experiences about accidents and safe or unsafe work practices. Recordkeeping is mandatory and all involved must sign off on each session.

Topics for your company could include: electrical safety, excavation and trenching safety, fall protection, scaffold safety, stairway and ladder safety, hazard communication, fire safety, personal protective equipment, tool safety, materials handling, etc.

Sample Tool Box Talks are provided compliments of the Safety Committee of the **Hartford County Homebuilders Association** in cooperation with the credited source of this Tool Box Talk. *Tool Box Safety Talks* can be purchased from the National Association of Homebuilders 1-800 368-5242, www.nahb.com or may be available through your business insurance provider. For more information on Tool Box Talks contact the HBA office 860 563-4212.

BUILD SAFELY – THINK SAFETY