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Fire Watch Safety during Hot Work in Shipyards

Workers assigned as fire watch are the first line of defense in protecting other workers and property from harm during hot work. Hot work includes any activity involving riveting, welding, burning, grinding or use of powder-actuated tools or similar fire- or spark-producing operations (29 CFR 1915.11(b)).

OSHA requires employers to:

- Provide workplaces that are free of recognized hazards.
- Select and provide required personal protective equipment at no cost to workers (29 CFR 1915 Subpart I).
- Train fire watch workers about job hazards, including how to fight fires at their incipient (beginning) stage (29 CFR 1915.508(c)).



Safe Work Practices

- Stay alert and be responsible to actively prevent and fight any incipient stage fires.
- Do not perform other duties in combination with fire watch activities while hot work is in progress (29 CFR 1915.504(c)).

For more information:

OSHA[®] Occupational
Safety and Health
Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

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- Have a clear view of and immediate access to all areas of hot work (29 CFR 1915.504(c)(2)(i)).
- Have the proper fire extinguisher or charged water hose ready for use.
- Ensure that you have the ability to communicate with workers in the area of hot work (29 CFR 1915.504(c)(2)(ii)).
- Isolate or cover combustible materials that cannot be removed with fire-resistant blankets and flame-retardant chemical gels or solutions. Wet down the area surrounding hot work.
- Do not abandon the hot work area during breaks or interruptions, or at the end of work shifts, unless properly relieved.
- Continue fire watch duties for at least 30 minutes after completing hot work, unless released by your employer after a site inspection (29 CFR 1915.504(c)(2)(iv)).
- Follow all confined space entry and hot work requirements established by your employer, the shipyard competent person (SCP), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)-certified Marine Chemist, or Coast Guard authorized person (29 CFR 1915.12 and 29 CFR 1915.14).
- Shut down any hot work activity deemed unsafe and take the appropriate corrective measures to restore and maintain safe conditions. Immediately address all concerns or refer questions to your employer or the SCP (29 CFR 1915.504(c)(2)(iii)).

REMEMBER

- Attempt to extinguish any incipient stage fires consistent with the fire protection equipment provided and your training (29 CFR 1915.504(c)(2)(vi)).
- If a fire gets beyond the incipient stage, alert workers and activate the alarm (29 CFR 1915.504(c)(2)(vii) and (viii)), then exit the area.

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