

Safety Flash

Incident with Property Damage

Incident: A subcontractor had demolished rooftop unit frames and cut steel supports about 12-18 inches above the roof. The subcontractor needed to cut several supports lower to install new steel and used a torch to make the cuts. One support was cut about 1 inch above the deck. About 15 minutes later, plant personnel noticed smoke in the building and a fire was discovered in the insulation under the roof material. The crew had a burn permit and all requirements in place, as well as a pre-task plan.

Possible contributing factors

- During pre-task planning, workers did not recognize the increased fire hazard of using a torch within 1 inch of the roof, instead of a portable band saw.
- No fire watch was assigned to monitor the underside of the roof.
- The demo drawing did not require the supports to be cut flush with the roof.
- The workers did not lay out the steel to identify interferences with the remaining supports until they were preparing for that day's work.

Primary contributing factor

- During pre-task planning, workers did not recognize the increased fire hazard of using a torch within 1 inch of the roof, instead of a portable band saw.

Possible solutions

- When planning hot work, take adequate precautions for the work location and consider adding fire watches in areas not visible to the crew.
- When tasks change, stop working and re-evaluate the plan.
- Review tool selection and safety with the crew.
- Identify alternative methods (such as a band saw) to eliminate hot work when possible.

Action plan

- Drawings were generated to identify other support interferences so they could be safely eliminated before the new steel installation.
- Review current and future work to eliminate fire hazards.
- The subcontractor reviewed fire hazards and tool selection with crews.
- Subcontractors on site began using STACs.
- Subcontractors reviewed initial plans at 1 p.m. and completed pre-task planning at the end of the day.

Keep improving

Your health and safety are our core value on every project. If you see a way we can support you in keeping our job sites safe, see your supervisor or contact: Jim Philo, 419/654-2043; Rich Franklin, Michigan, 734/679-7283; Alan Doane, Cleveland, 440/429-0639; or Mark Hoffman, 419/360-9280.