

MCAA Toolbox Safety Talks

Job Site Fire Prevention

There are too many job site fires each year caused by the mechanical trades. Keep these points in mind to help prevent fires.

- Poor housekeeping is a major contributing cause of job site fires. Paper, cardboard and any other combustible materials should be picked up and thrown away in a dumpster. Clean-up should occur frequently enough so that trash does not accumulate. Oily rags should be disposed of in fire-safe containers that are manufactured and approved for this purpose.
- Flammable and combustible liquids should be kept in fire-safe containers with self-closing lids that are approved specifically for this purpose. They should also be properly stored whenever they are not being used. Flammable gases like acetylene should be kept a safe distance from ignition sources. Make sure the cylinder valve is shut off when it is not in use. When you are finished with the cylinder for the day, it is a good idea to shut off the gas at the cylinder, remove the hose, attach the valve cover cap and properly store the cylinder.
- Uncontrolled sources of ignition are the other major contributing cause of job site fires. If you smoke, don't extinguish your cigarette anywhere near combustible materials or flammable liquids or gases. Make sure your cigarette butts are completely extinguished before you discard them. The same holds true for matches used for any purpose.
- Welding, cutting, torch brazing, torch soldering, grinding, operating a pipe cutter, etc., are all potential ignition sources. When welding, use fire resistant covers and spark shields to keep sparks contained in the immediate area. Make sure the proper fire extinguishers are close by. Don't forget to post a fire watch. Before you start grinding, look around and remove anything combustible or flammable. When you are finished, recheck the immediate area looking for signs of fire.