



October 7 — Before the First Spark

Witnessed a pre-hot work meeting between customer and A-Lert personnel. Customer advised they would get hose stretched out and available for wash down. A-Lert would be responsible from there.

This is an area that is full of coal piles. A-Lert leader did a great job of communicating with customer and the crew to ensure tasks were assigned and adhered to.

Good Hot Work Starts With Good Communication

Before hot work begins, there is more to consider than the work itself. The people involved need to understand the job, the conditions around the work, and who is responsible for the controls that have been identified.

This observation is a good example of that being done correctly. A pre-hot-work meeting was held between customer and A-Lert personnel. During the meeting, the customer communicated that they would get the hose stretched out and available for washdown. A-Lert would be responsible from there.

That clear discussion established who was responsible for what before the work began. The A-Lert leader also did a good job communicating with the customer and the crew to make sure the tasks were assigned and adhered to.

The location made that planning especially important because the work was taking place in an area with full coal piles. Having the washdown capability discussed and responsibilities clearly established before hot work started is an example of proactive safety planning.

Safety isn't always about stopping something that is wrong. Sometimes a good safety observation shows us what right looks like. Taking the time to communicate, assign responsibilities, and make sure everyone follows through on the plan helps the crew start the job with a common understanding of what is expected.

Hazards

- Hot work in an area with full coal piles
- Sparks and hot material associated with hot work
- Potential ignition of combustible material
- Need for washdown capability during the work
- Multiple groups involved in the work

Words of Wisdom

A strong hot-work plan starts before the first spark. Communicate the plan, clearly assign the responsibilities, and make sure everyone understands their part before the work begins.

Pause and Think

- Before hot work begins, have the people involved discussed the plan?
- Does everyone understand what they are responsible for?
- Have the controls needed for the work been identified before starting?
- When another group is involved, have responsibilities been clearly communicated?
- Are we following through on the responsibilities that were agreed upon during the pre-job discussion?

Closing Thought

Good safety doesn't always come from correcting a problem. Sometimes it comes from doing the planning and communication right before the problem ever has a chance to develop.