SHARP START

DECEMBER 1 — Know Your Tools

Let's imagine you may have a possible gas leak, so you decide to light a candle to see because it's closer to you. Using a battery drill in Distillation is like lighting a candle in a room that *might* be full of propane — nothing seems wrong until the air decides otherwise.

When vapors settle low where sparks ignite,
The smallest slip can steal the light.
Pick tools designed for where you stand—
Only trust the **right power** in your hand.

See Say Stop:

In the Distillation area, where fumes drift unseen like ghosts waiting for invitation, a battery drill showed up — a stranger in a place where sparks have too many places to run. Fatigue dulled awareness, and complacency whispered, "It's fine, we've used it before." Hazards love that whisper.

Hazards

- Vapor ignition → explosion
- Flash fire burns
- Multi-person injury

Stats

- 60% of process fires involve non-rated tools
- 25+ documented battery-tool ignitions
- Vapor ignition = #1 cause of distillation unit fires

Words of Wisdom

Only intrinsically safe tools belong here. Intrinsically safe means the tool itself can't start the fire — even if it fails. It's like building a lighter that doesn't have enough fuel to ever spark. In chemical and grain environments, one stray spark can turn an ordinary job into an emergency, so we use equipment that's safe by design — not just safe when it's used right.

Intrinsically safe equipment will always have labels such as "Ex ia," "Class I Division 1," "IECEx," "ATEX," or "UL913/FM approved for hazardous locations." If those markings aren't on the tool, it is *not* intrinsically safe—no guessing, no assumptions. IS devices also use special low-energy battery systems and are rated for specific Zones or Divisions, which will be printed directly on the unit or listed in the manufacturer's documentation. Regular flashlights, radios, phones, or power tools almost never qualify unless they explicitly carry these certifications. **If it doesn't have the stamp, label, or rating, it is NOT intrinsically safe.** This isn't the place to test your luck or your tools.

Pause and think:

When we've done a task a hundred times, the brain stops paying full attention—we skip checks, overlook hazards, and assume everything will go the same way it always has. Complacency blinds us to changes in the task, the environment, or the conditions around us.

- Where does complacency sneak up on YOU most often?
- What's a tool rule you've seen broken because 'it's quicker'?
- How does fatigue affect your morning decision-making?