



SHARP START



April 22 — Before the Spark

A crew started working without hot work permit.	I stopped the work and got a hot work permit for them.
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A crew had already started hot work without a permit in place.

The tools were out. The task was underway. But the step that mattered most hadn't been done yet.

Hot work permits aren't paperwork for the office. They're a process to identify and control hazards before the first spark is made.

They ensure:

- Fire risks are evaluated
- Combustible materials are cleared
- Fire watch is assigned
- Extinguishers are in place

Without that process, the work may look the same, but the risk is completely different.

Nothing had gone wrong yet. But with hot work, the first sign of a problem is often the fire itself.

This wasn't about not knowing the requirement. It was about starting the job before fully preparing for it.

And once the spark hits, it's too late to go back.

Hazards

- Fire from sparks or slag
- Ignition of nearby combustible materials
- Uncontrolled hot work conditions
- Lack of fire watch
- Inadequate fire protection
- Line of fire exposure to thermal energy

Stats

- Hot work is a leading cause of industrial fires
- Many workplace fires start during welding, cutting, or grinding operations
- Proper permitting significantly reduces fire risk
- Fires can start minutes or even hours after hot work is completed

Words of Wisdom

- The job doesn't start until it's safe to start
- Permits don't slow work they prepare it
- Be ready before the spark

Pause and Think

It's easy to move straight into a task when everything is ready tools are out, the crew is there, and the job feels simple. That's when preparation steps can feel like delays instead of protection.

But hot work doesn't give second chances. Once the work starts, the risk is already in motion. And if something was missed beforehand, it won't show itself until it's too late to control easily.

That's why the most important part of the job happens before it begins.

- Do I ensure permits are in place before starting hot work?
- Have all fire hazards been identified and controlled?
- Am I treating permits as protection — or paperwork?
- Would I stop work if this step was skipped?