



February 13 — Hot Work Near a Leak

<p>I observed a leaking rubber boot on the top of beer well tank. Welding was taking place on another tank nearby, so I shut the welder down and notified my coworkers of the hazard.</p>	<p>The boot was adjusted and retightened to stop the leak.</p>
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A leaking rubber boot was observed on the top of a beer well tank while welding was taking place on a nearby tank. Work was stopped immediately, and coworkers were notified of the hazard.

**A spark flew high, a leak ran low,
That's how big dangers start to grow.
Stop the weld and sound the call,
Before a small spark burns it all.**

The welding itself wasn't the problem the environment was. A leak near a hot work area creates an invisible ignition risk. Vapors, liquids, or residues can travel farther than expected, and sparks don't stay where we aim them. By the time a leak becomes obvious during welding, it's often already too late to react.

This incident was prevented because someone chose to stop work instead of pushing forward.

Hazards

- Ignition of flammable vapors or liquids
- Flash fire or explosion
- Rapid fire spread between tanks
- Burns and severe injuries to nearby workers
- Escalation into a process safety incident

Stats

- Hot work is a leading cause of industrial fires and explosions
- Many fire incidents occur due to unnoticed leaks or residues
- Vapors can travel significant distances before ignition
- Early intervention is one of the most effective controls in preventing major incidents

Words of Wisdom

- Sparks don't care where the leak is.
- If something's leaking, hot work stops.

Pause and Think

Leaks often feel small until they meet heat. When work is underway, people hesitate to stop it because it feels disruptive. But stopping work is sometimes the safest and most professional decision on a job site. Recognizing when conditions have changed is what separates routine work from catastrophic incidents.

- What changes in the environment should trigger a stop-work decision?
- How far can vapors travel from a leak?
- Who has the authority to shut down hot work?