



# Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

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ALERT 07 – 21

## TORCH CUTTING OPERATIONS RESULTS IN A FIRE

### WHAT HAPPENED:

Personnel were using a cutting torch to cut off several wall-mounted brackets on the outside of a mechanic shop wall on a barge rig. During the process, personnel noticed smoke coming from an adjacent room. Personnel went to investigate and discovered that the room was locked. After getting the room open, it was determined that there was no fire. No injuries resulted.

### WHAT CAUSED IT:

The inside wall of the adjacent room had been newly painted and during the cutting process, the paint began burning filling the shop with smoke. The opposite side of the wall had not been inspected prior to initiating the cutting procedure.

### CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: To address this incident, this company instructed rig supervisors in the following:

The Company's HSE manual states that: "If combustible materials are found, isolate those combustibles from potential sources of ignition." The near miss report stated the corrective action taken as "Cutting and welding should not proceed when the fire watch cannot view all surrounding or adjacent areas." This is an excellent corrective action that supports the company HSE manual policy on isolating combustibles. To discover the presence of potential combustibles, the surrounding area must be surveyed completely.

This incident is similar to another occurrence this year where combustibles on the other side of a wall were not considered which *did* resulting in a fire. These incidents have led us to modify the HSE manual, "Steps to be taken in issuing a hot work permit" to read:

- Observe an area of at least 35' around the hot work site, including inside adjacent rooms, walls or barriers, as well as upper and lower levels. All potential sources for ignition must be addressed before work can begin.

This "bullet" item will be included in the next update of the company's HSE manual.

A Hot Work Permit should not be issued until the surrounding and adjacent areas have been inspected for combustibles.

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**The Corrective Actions stated in this alert are one company's attempts to address the incident, and do not necessarily reflect the position of IADC or the IADC HSE Committee.**

This material is presented for information purposes only. Managers & Supervisors should evaluate this information to determine if it can be applied to their own situations and practices

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