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Introduction

This chapter sets out the procedures and guidance for the health and safety management of hot working activities undertaken by those who work on the West Norfolk Academies Trust estate.

For the purposes of this chapter hot working means any activity or process that generates flame, heat or an incendive spark and introduces (or presents) a foreseeable risk of fire or explosion through a source of ignition by means of tools or equipment either:

- intentionally arising from working methods (with or without the use of a naked flame) such as welding, flame-cutting, soldering, brazing; or
- the unintentional generation of heat or sparks, by the use of power/hand tools e.g. grinding and the use of disc-cutters.

Over the years hot working has resulted in many major fires and explosions which have caused a number of fatalities and serious injuries as well as property/asset losses. Where reasonably practicable the need for hot working should be eliminated by the use of other processes that do not involve the application or generation of heat or sparks.

Flammable liquids and vapours such as petrol, diesel, fuel oil, paints, solvents, glue, dusts etc. are found in many places of work and under certain conditions (i.e. hot working) can explode violently. Just a teaspoon of petrol in a drum can be enough to cause an explosion, when heated and turned into a vapour.

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Head

It is the responsibility of the Executive Head to ensure that suitable systems are in place and that adequate resources are made available for hot work to be conducted in accordance with appropriate safe systems of work that may include the use of a Permit to Work.

Headteacher/Managers

The Headteacher/Manager (owner of the task) is responsible for ensuring that for any activity undertaken by West Norfolk Academies Trust staff involving hot working, that a risk assessment is conducted by a competent person having sufficient experience and training in all associated risks. The risk assessment should consider:

- isolating/shielding plant/equipment from the effects of heat;
- the transference of heat to the surrounding work environment;

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- the environment in which the activity is to be carried out (including what is
- above, below and in the immediate vicinity) and the possibility of explosive
- atmospheres;
- all other task related hazards (non-heat related).

A written safe system of work should be developed and maintained for all hot working activities unless the risk assessment has identified that it is not necessary.

When developing a safe system of work for hot working, the following should be considered (this list is not exhaustive):

- work equipment selected is suitable for the activity, is properly maintained and where appropriate, adequately secured;
- ensure equipment is visually inspected and is safe to use before commencing the work;
- all fixed services that may be affected by the activity (oil, gas, electricity, etc.) are located and protected (isolated, locked, vented, etc.);
- the need for all combustible/flammable material to be removed/protected;
- actions required to minimise the possibility of explosive atmospheres;
- area secured (access control, etc.);
- the need for appropriate fire prevention measures and firefighting equipment;
- monitoring the work area to ensure that a fire does not start after the activity is complete;
- area adequately ventilated and/or personal and respiratory protective equipment (PPE & RPE) issued/used;
- precautions have been taken to minimise the release of sparks, hazardous emissions, etc;
- additional emergency procedures:
- there is no doubt as to who has overall control of the work.

Where the risk assessment has identified a significant risk a PTW should be raised and communicated to all relevant staff. The manager should ensure that all control measures have been implemented prior to commencement of the work.

The information that should be contained in a PTW for hot working will depend on each activity but will normally include:

- the location and nature of the work;

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- the proposed time and duration of the work;
- the limits of time for which the PTW is valid;
- the precautions to be taken before the work starts, during the work (if deemed necessary appointing of a competent and trained firewatcher), and on completion of the work (this may need to be monitored for several hours after the work is completed);
- the requirement for authorisation, acceptance, completion and cancellation signatures;
- the person in direct control of the work.

The line manager is responsible for ensuring hot working is only carried out by competent persons. They should monitor the hot work activity to ensure the work is carried out in line with the safe system of work and on completion of the work the area has been left in a safe condition. Steps to ensure that an area is left safe following a hot working activity may include:

- the use of fire watchers (monitoring an area for a defined period of time for signs of smouldering materials or the onset of fire);
- accelerated cooling/damping down of the area/equipment;
- all safety systems reinstated (smoke detector covers removed etc);
- area is cleared of equipment/debris.

All Staff

All West Norfolk Academies Trust staff engaged in hot working must comply with the required controls defined in the safe system of work/permit to work and cooperate with management by undertaking appropriate instruction and training.

Legislation and Guidance

- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
- The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)
- HSE - L137 Approved Code of Practice – Safe Maintenance, repair and cleaning procedures
- HSE - INDG297 - Safety in Gas Welding, Cutting or Similar Processes
- HSE - INDG314 - Hot work on small tanks and drums