

Spot The Safety Violation: Where Do We Even Begin?



This photo depicts several safety hazards. How many can you spot'



A single mistake or safety shortcut on the job can have serious consequences. So imagine what can happen when multiple mistakes are committed or safety hazards are left unaddressed.

For example, this picture from WorkSafe Victoria in Australia contains several safety hazards.

First, the worker in the picture is using a saw to cut pieces of metal framing, which is generating a lot of sparks. These sparks could easily ignite the flammable material in the area around where he's working.

So-called 'hot work' such as what this worker is doing is any work that produces or uses flames, arcs, sparks, heat, friction or other sources of heat or ignition. When hot work is done in the presence of flammable or combustible materials, a fire or explosion can result.

To prevent fires or explosions from hot work, you should have a hot work permit program. A hot work permit identifies the work to be done, the hazards involved in that work and the safety precautions to be taken (see, model hot work permit).

In addition, when hot work is being done, a fire extinguisher should be located nearby in the event that something does catch fire despite your precautions. And in the picture, there doesn't seem to be a fire extinguisher on hand.

Second, the worker should be using a saw bench to safely cut the metal frames.

Instead, he has the saw sitting on a stack of sheetrock and is bracing the material being cut with his foot, which is only millimetres from the cutting blade.

Under the OHS laws, employers must protect workers when they use power tools, such as saws. To comply with these requirements, employers should implement a power tool program that includes:

1. Guidelines on selecting the proper power tool for the job;
2. Safe work procedures for the use of power tools;
3. Rules for power tool inspection and maintenance; and
4. Training for all workers who use power tools on the job.

Lastly, poor housekeeping on a worksite is evident in the picture. The boxes, wrapping and other materials strewn across the floor pose tripping hazards. In fact, slips, trips and falls are some of the most common safety incidents caused by poor housekeeping. (Download and use this slips, trips & falls inspection checklist to identify such hazards.)

Good housekeeping practices are necessary to keep work areas clean and free from clutter. (See, the housekeeping requirements under the OHS laws.) Use this model housekeeping checklist to inspect your workplace and evaluate the effectiveness of your housekeeping practices.