



SAFETY ALERT

A serious fire occurred recently at International City which resulted from the poor management of a hot work activity. Oxy-Acetylene welding was being carried out in a service riser near copper pipe work which was covered with an insulating material. The insulation caught light and spread through the riser causing smoke damage to 3 floors of the building.

Investigation by EHS identified that the incident was the result of several factors. The contractor had failed to implement a hot work permit procedure and there were no fire extinguishers readily available to put the fire out once it had started. A very similar incident occurred in Dubai at the Oasis Centre which resulted in the building burning down and the workers involved being imprisoned for up to 6 months.

The accident could easily have been prevented if the following points were adhered to:-

- ➔ *A suitably experienced person should undertake a risk assessment for all hot work activities and identify operations that need the additional control of a permit to work system.*
- ➔ *The hot work permit to work must introduce an additional level of control, it is not a paper work exercise.*
- ➔ *The issuance of a hot work permit must be made only after a competent person has inspected the area where hot working is to be undertaken.*
- ➔ *Permits must be closed out when the work is complete or at the end of each shift, whichever is sooner. A register of hot work permits should be maintained by an appointed person.*
- ➔ *Fire extinguishers must be provided when hot works are carried out and any slab penetrations should be covered with a fire blanket. Combustible materials must be removed from the area.*
- ➔ *Supervisors should regularly check hot work operations and ensure that the necessary controls are in place.*

For further information contact:

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