

17/02/2022

# Worker suffers flash burns

**12 November 2021**

A 34-year-old worker was injured while working on the balcony of a townhouse in Botany. A temporary plastic canopy was installed over the balcony to act as a rain barrier. The worker was undertaking waterproofing at the time using a highly flammable solvent-based contact adhesive, membrane sheets and a hot air tool. An open plastic bucket containing the decanted adhesive ignited, and remained on fire, resulting in second to third degree burns to both legs of the worker. Parts of the balcony, including the plastic canopy, caught on fire.



*Location of incident*



*Balcony where the fire took place*

## Safety information

Consider 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks associated with working with hazardous chemicals and when conducting hot work activities.

### When conducting hot work activities:

- implement a hot work permit which includes a detailed review to identify all potential hazards associated with the proposed hot work activity and to eliminate the hazards, or where this is not reasonably practicable control the resulting risks
- identify and remove any possible flammable or combustible materials in the area, including rubbish, paper or dust that could be potential fuel sources or produce dust explosions

---

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing and the findings are not yet confirmed. SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation in response to the incident to determine its cause and circumstances. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

---

17/02/2022

- ensure the area is not a confined space
- ensure the area is adequately ventilated
- ensure adequate firefighting equipment is available and ready for use
- utilise a fire watch person to monitor the hot work environment
- provide training to workers about the hazards associated with hot works, the use of the hot work permit system and emergency planning
- ensure workers are wearing appropriate non-flammable personal protective equipment.

### **When working with hazardous chemicals:**

- identify the physical and health hazards of chemicals at work before first use. Inform and train workers in safe use, following manufacturer's instructions or instructions on the Safety Data Sheet
- remove ignition sources from hazardous areas
- substitute a highly flammable liquid with one that is less flammable or combustible
- ensure ventilation is adequate to avoid the creation of a hazardous atmosphere
- physically separate hazardous chemicals from any chemicals or other things that may be incompatible
- distance workers from hazardous chemicals and any potential hazards generated by their use
- use intrinsically safe electrical equipment - consider whether the hazardous chemicals can generate flammable or explosive atmospheres, and ensure that any equipment being used, like stirrers, is safe.

### **More information**

- [Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace - Code of Practice](#)
- [Hot Work Safety Alert – SafeWork NSW](#)
- [Flammable substances – SafeWork NSW](#)

View the latest incident information releases at [safework.nsw.gov.au](https://safework.nsw.gov.au)