



Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc
Box 2004, Suite 2200, 20 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario M4R 1K8
Telephone (416) 484-4555 Facsimile (416) 484-0820

‘HOT WORK’ PROTOCOL REDUCES POTENTIAL FOR FIRE LOSS

TORONTO, ONTARIO (January 8, 2010) Two devastating fires recently covered in the news were a harsh reminder that vacant buildings and buildings under renovation are at increased risk for experiencing a fire loss. Stuart Rowley, Underwriting and Operations Manager for Ecclesiastical Insurance, advises that “hot work” is often a common cause of ignition.

The term ‘hot work’ refers to work that produces an open flame, sparks, or any other likely ignition source. Welding, soldering, cutting and grinding or activities involving the use of gases, flammable liquids, grinders and blowtorches, are considered hot work, and the risk of fire is heightened during these operations.

To mitigate or reduce the potential for a fire loss resulting from hot work, it is recommended that a hot work protocol be implemented and adhered to and that the following steps be taken:

1. Have a ‘Hot Work Permit’ system in place. The permit should include details such as the nature of the work, the location, time period allotted, completion date, a “final check” time, and a checklist of precautions that must be carried out.
2. Hot work should only be carried out by qualified workers.
3. Monitor all work being undertaken by contractors and ensure that contractors are aware of the location of fire extinguishers.
4. A dry chemical fire extinguisher should be present on the work site while work is being completed.
5. The worksite should be inspected daily by a responsible official while the work is ongoing, and a fire watch maintained for at least two hours following the completion of each day’s work.
6. Remove all combustible materials used for the work from the site at the end of each day. Store combustible building materials (e.g., flammable liquids, gas cylinders, paint, etc.) outside and well away from the building. Gas cylinders should not be left on the roof.
7. Ensure that the area where the work is being completed is well ventilated.
8. If possible, wet down the area before work is completed.
9. No smoking on or near the work site.
10. Remove all combustible materials within 30 feet of the work site. Combustible materials within the vicinity that cannot be removed should be covered with a fire-resistive shielding to avoid any contact with the flame.
11. Ensure you have proof of insurance coverage from the contractor (i.e. a certificate of insurance).
12. Inform your insurers of the work being done.

About Ecclesiastical Insurance

Ecclesiastical Insurance is the insurer of choice for Canada's faith-based organizations. We also insure retirement homes, private schools, registered charities, non-profit groups and associations, unique and heritage properties and select commercial establishments such as art galleries and museums. The company was established in the United Kingdom in 1887 and opened in Canada in 1972. Ecclesiastical is owned by a charitable trust and is committed to serving the needs of its customers and the larger community. Group profits (other than funds required for business operations) are redistributed for the benefit of faith and charitable initiatives. Ecclesiastical is rated "A" by A.M. Best, and "A-" by Standard and Poor's.

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For more information about risk control or Ecclesiastical Insurance, please contact:

Stuart Rowley
Underwriting and Operations Manager for Canada
(416) 484-4918
srowley@eccles-ins.com

Jacinta Whyte
General Manager & Chief Agent for Canada
(416) 484-4900
jwhyte@eccles-ins.com