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Subject: Alcohol based Hand Sanitiser & Hot Works Toolbox Talk.

Construction companies whose employees are undertaking hot works have been warned about the risk alcohol-based hand sanitisers pose.

Safety consultancy CE Safety issued the warning about the sanitisers, now found on sites throughout the UK to reduce the spread of covid-19, after a worker at an unnamed firm repairing gas pipelines used alcohol gel and later came into contact with a static spark, which ignited the gel and gave them second-degree burns on their hands. The firm is now providing workers with alcohol-free hand sanitiser.

A spokesperson for CE Safety said: "Alcohol is highly effective at killing germs, which is why it is such a prevalent ingredient in hand sanitisers worldwide. Unfortunately, liquids that have high concentrations of alcohol come with a fire risk: ranging from flammable, to highly flammable, to extremely flammable.

"If any of your work environments involve open flames/heat sources, flying sparks or anything of that nature, the use of alcoholic hand sanitiser poses a constant risk to fire safety and personal health and safety, because the vapour could conceivably ignite."

CE Safety pointed out that the most effective way to tackle the virus is through hand washing with soap and water, although it acknowledged that alcoholic hand sanitiser will still be widely used on sites.

It advised that whenever an employee applies alcoholic sanitiser, they must wait until the liquid has fully evaporated on their skin before they begin or resume work – especially when working next to naked flames or in any other environments that pose static-charge risk.



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