

Torch-Applied Roofing: Verify What the Flame Can Reach

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Why this matters

A roof can look clear while combustible material hides beneath a flashing or behind a penetration. A hot-work permit does not prove the assembly is suitable for a torch.

Objective: Verify the approved assembly, concealed fire paths and watch arrangements before lighting.

Key hazards or failure points

Hidden ignition; gas leaks; heat reaching occupied spaces; damaged hoses; falls while applying roofing or checking below.

Practical controls

- Use trained roofers and the specified torch-compatible system. Confirm the actual deck, insulation, membrane and details against approved instructions. Hold work where materials or concealed conditions are unknown; obtain an approved alternative.
- Arrange hot-work authorization, combustible protection and safe access for inspection and fire watch. Coordinate occupied areas below and emergency notification. Maintain roof fall protection; a watch must not enter an unprotected edge or opening.
- Use the correct LPG cylinder, regulator, hose and torch. Trained personnel complete prescribed inspections and leak checks. Protect equipment from heat and damage; never use a flame to find leaks or warm a cylinder.

Verify It in the Field

At today's detail, point to the assembly approval and identify what is behind and below it. Compare actual conditions with the instructions; a familiar membrane brand alone is insufficient evidence.

Walk the heat paths from the application area to penetrations, flashings and accessible underside locations. Show the protection, extinguisher, alarm method and safe observation positions before starting.

Name the watcher and relief person. Record the governing inspection areas, duration, last-torch time and closeout responsibility. Confirm equipment checks and how work will stop if watch coverage is lost.

Stop and reassess

Stop for unknown substrate, concealed access concerns, gas odor, damaged equipment, failed protection, lost watch coverage or unexpected smoke. Withdraw and activate the emergency plan for suspected fire; do not open a concealed space to investigate.

Ask the crew

1. What can heat reach behind this detail?
2. What proves torch application is approved here?
3. Who owns the watch after the last torch shuts down?

Use the task plan and required specialist decisions before exposure.

Sources: OSHA 1926.352; 1926.153; OSHA roofing guidance; actual system instructions.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/torch-applied-roofing-safety