



**SAN FRANCISCO FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
Public Information Office

8/5/10

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**Public Service Announcement**

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**0800 Hrs**

**For Immediate Release PST**  
**Mindy Talmadge – 415 – 558-3403**  
**Mindy Talmadge - 415 – 699-6150(C)**

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**Preventing Fires Caused During Roofing Practices**  
**Important Information for Homeowners**

An excessive number of building fires caused by roofers using open flame in their work has caused the San Francisco Fire Marshal, Barbara Schultheis great concern. "There is no excuse for these fires to be occurring. If roofing contractors follow proper procedures, each year hundreds of thousands of dollars in property losses could be avoided." said the Fire Marshal.

Most building owners are unaware that roofers using a torch or open flame to install Torch Down Roofing systems are required to have a Building Permit and a Fire Department Permit. Additionally, the San Francisco Fire Code requires that the roofer hire a "firewatch", a person whose primary job is to watch the worker using the torch to ensure that they're working safely. The firewatch is also required to have proper training on the use of a fire extinguisher and carry one with them at all times. Additionally, they must remain on the job site for an hour after the work day has ended to ensure that a fire does not start after everyone has left.

How building owners can avoid potential damage to their property:

**BEFORE** signing a contract for services, verify the following:

- **The contractor obtains a building permit with the SF Department of Building Inspection (DBI).**  
It is recommended that you contact DBI to verify this before the work is scheduled to begin by checking the DBI, Online Permit and Complaint Tracking: <http://dbiweb.sfgov.org/dbipts/?page=addressquery> (after entering & verifying address information, select Building Permits)
- **If the roofer is using a torch, open flame, or LP-Gas for any aspect of the work, they must have the appropriate permit required by the San Francisco Fire Department.**  
To verify, contact the [SFFD Bureau of Prevention, Permit Section](#).
- **Review your homeowner's insurance coverage.**  
Make sure losses resulting from fires caused by installation of Torch Down Roofing systems are covered.
- **Read the SFFD Administrative Bulletin on Safe Roofing Practices** <http://38.106.4.187/index.aspx?page=970>

**Don't let YOUR roofing project go up in flames!**

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