

# Safety and health alert

## 38/99 Unsafe system in aluminium boat construction

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### Incident

In May 1999, a person working in the Aluminium Boat Building Industry in Albany suffered superficial burns to the face, neck, forearm and thigh, when a hand held pressure pack can of anti corrosive exploded. The anti corrosive was being applied to the inside of the hull of a 5 metre aluminium boat through a small opening that was later to be welded shut.

The explosion is thought to have been caused by an electrical charge, possibly from a welder working on the outside of the hull, contacting the pressure pack can or the combustible spray cloud. It is also possible that the source of ignition was static electricity from the hull of the boat.

Investigation revealed that poor earthing of the hull during construction, which included welding operations, resulted in a source of ignition being present during the spraying of volatile surface coatings.

### Factors

1. The owner of the business did not identify the risks associated with the use of pressure packs or volatile sprays in close proximity to a welding process.
2. The employer did not read the warning label on the pressure pack can prior to use.
3. There was inadequate earthing of the hull during welding and spraying processes.

### Recommendations

1. A risk assessment should be conducted prior to commencement of work. Hazards should be identified and appropriate control measures implemented.
2. Persons at the workplace must, prior to starting work, receive appropriate information, including Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) where necessary, instruction and training.
3. Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be provided and worn as prescribed in the MSDS.

### Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au), or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au).

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