

Safety and health alert

15/04 Explosions: aluminium boat repairs

Incident

Three apprentices were seriously injured in separate incidents when explosions occurred during the repair of aluminium boats. The explosions were caused when fuel vapours trapped within the bilges of the vessels ignited during hot work including the use of an open flame and MIG Welding equipment.

Factors

- Risk assessments were not conducted to identify any hazards prior to work being carried out in any of the incidents.
- Welding and allied process operations were not conducted in accordance with Australian Standard (AS) 1674 Safety in welding and allied processes.
- The presence of fuel vapours in petrol-driven boats was not considered prior to commencing work.

Recommendations

1. All welding and allied processes must be conducted in accordance with Regulation 3.96 of the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996*, with particular attention given to the requirements of Section 3 of AS 1674.1.
2. Management should provide adequate and appropriate pre-planning of all jobs. This should include a risk assessment, identifying each hazard to which a person is likely to be exposed and the likelihood of injury or harm to a person resulting from each hazard identified. Management must then consider the means by which the risk may be reduced.

Further Information

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

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