

DECEMBER 2005

HOT SAFETY TIPS FOR WELDING, CUTTING, & GRINDING

When you weld, cut or grind, the potential for accidents is significant. Eyes and skin can be burned, hearing can be damaged and an electric shock can kill you. Among the hot metal, sparks and flying chips, are compressed gases stored in high-pressure cylinders. Even the fumes and gases produced during the welding process can damage your respiratory system or cause asphyxiation.

It's crucial to be cautious. Wear your personal protective equipment (PPE), maintain a safe workplace and follow safety rules.

Your PPE should include:



Eye protection to shield against sparks, molten metal and welder's flash

Hearing protection

Clothing made of heat resistant materials, such as an apron made of leather

Safety boots

Gloves made of leather or other flameproof fabric

Respiratory protection to protect against toxic chemicals and gases. Before you use a respirator, get proper training and have it properly fitted.

Wearing the right PPE is just the first step. You must also keep your work area safe and follow these safety rules:

Try to weld only in well-ventilated areas.

Work in confined spaces only if they've been atmosphere-tested. Follow all other confined space procedures.

Do not weld, cut or grind near flammable or combustible materials, liquids, vapors and dusts.

Have the appropriate fire extinguisher close by.

Use only approved equipment in good condition and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Inspect equipment for loose connections, bare wires or cables before operating. Make sure the machinery is properly grounded.

Handle compressed gas cylinders safely, following proper use and storage procedures.

Keep aisles and stairways clear of cables and equipment.

Keep other people a safe distance from welding and cutting operations.

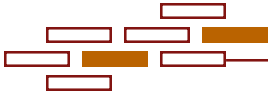
Learn first aid techniques for burns, poison inhalation, shock and eye injuries.

Know where the safety showers and eyewash stations are and how to use them.



You should also watch for symptoms of metal fume fever, caused by breathing fumes formed while welding. Symptoms may include a metallic taste in the mouth, dry nose and throat, weakness, fatigue, joint and muscle pain, fever, chills and nausea. Notify your supervisor immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.

Take responsibility for your own safety when you weld, cut and grind. Wear the right PPE, maintain a safe workplace and follow the safety rules that apply to your job.



STAY ALERT IN WORK ZONES

Heavy equipment safety - what does that have to do with you? Plenty, if you work at construction sites.

Mobile machines such as backhoes, front-end loaders, compactors and cranes take a great deal of training, planning and skill to operate safely. But even staying safe in the vicinity of this equipment is something that takes attention and effort. Many pedestrians and motorists have been killed in collisions with heavy equipment.

One reason for these incidents is that most heavy machines have a blind spot where the operators cannot see some of their surroundings. The person on foot or in an automobile may assume the operator knows he is there. Then the heavy machine moves or turns unexpectedly and the passerby doesn't stand a chance.

When an unauthorized person is near heavy machinery, there is also the chance of being struck by the load. Many fatalities have occurred when the load fell from a crane or loader onto a person beneath. Never walk under an elevated load, and always wear the required hardhat if you work in these zones. A swinging hook on a hoist or debris falling from above can cause a fatal head injury.

There is also the chance of getting caught between two pieces of heavy equipment or in a pinchpoint such as that created when an articulated loader turns.

Never hitch a ride on heavy equipment. Authorized passengers ride only if there is a seat and seat belt for them. Never ride on any part of the equipment not designed for human occupancy. A loader bucket or a hoist on a crane is not a safe substitute for a proper personlift.

If you work around heavy equipment, know the correct hand signals to direct equipment. The operator must take direction only from the designated signalperson, but must respond to an emergency stop signal from any worker on the ground.

During refueling of heavy equipment, stop all engines in the vicinity and do not smoke. Do not do any work, such as welding, cutting

Gary Gibson Winner in Our Eyes

Our own Gary Gibson competed in the 2005 LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon on October 8, 2005.

Gary completed a marathon training course sponsored by Gazelle Sports, in which they prepare you for the grueling 26.2 mile run before competing in the marathon.

Gary completed his marathon in 4 hours, 16 minutes and 31 seconds.

So if you have a goal that you thought was unobtainable, take inspiration from Gary.

And give him a pat on the back next time you see him for a job well done.



or grinding which could ignite the fuel vapors.

Be alert to backup alarms, but never rely on them to keep you from being struck or run over.

IT'S COLD OUT THERE

If you're working outdoors this winter, protect yourself from the cold and damp. Working when you're cold and wet not only makes it harder to concentrate, use tools, or operate equipment, prolonged exposure can cause hypothermia or frostbite.

Hypothermia begins when your internal body temperature drops below normal and loses heat faster than it can produce it. Symptoms include shivering, slurred speech, confusion, and clumsy movement. Exposure to cold, moisture, and wind increases the risk of hypothermia which occurs most often between 20° and 50° F. Moisture on your skin or clothing increases the likelihood of your body losing heat; even light wind intensifies the effect on exposed skin. And when your tired, your body has less energy to use for heat.

Prevention

Know before you go. Learn the signs and symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite. Check the weather forecast, consider your work environment, and wear layered clothing. Many prescription drugs make you drowsy, fatigued, or sensitive to cold; if you're taking a medication, ask your pharmacist about its effects. When you're on the job:

Drink warm, sweet beverages to keep hydrated.

Eat warm high-calorie foods for energy.

Take short rest breaks in a dry, warm shelter, if possible.

Work with a partner, carry a cell phone, or tell others where you're working and when you'll return.

We welcome your comments and suggestions about the Connection. To submit articles and/or topic ideas, please call: (269) 629-9708 or send to P.O. Box 460, Richland, MI 49083. Also visit our website at: www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com

