

SAFETY ALERT

221 – Burns from Welding Activity

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

A Programmed Skilled Workforce (PSW) employee, who is employed as a fitter and turner, sustained significant burns to his right calf after welding spatter landed on his pants whilst carrying out Mig welding activities

The employee was wearing two layers of clothing; thin cotton work pants, with another set of thin cotton overalls over the top whilst performing the welding works.

The employee was in the process of welding 50 mm R.H.STO square tubes onto a Bunnings trolley (vertical up weld) at waist height in the maintenance area of the workplace. He had completed two of four tubes and was in the process of welding the third tube when his pants caught fire due to welding spatter. A colleague, who was working on a bench nearby, heard the employee call for help. The employee was on the opposite side of the trolley, trying to pad out and extinguish the right calf area of his overalls however was unsuccessful.

Injuries

The employee sustained third degree burns to their calf on their right leg and underwent skin grafting surgery. The employee is recovering well.



Findings

- The employee was not provided with or wearing suitable personal protective equipment such as a leather welding apron or heavy duty cotton overalls.
- The overalls and work pants the employee was wearing were a thin cotton material which would have a higher risk of flammability than that of heavy weight thick cotton drill overalls and work pants.
- The employee did not notice initially that his clothing was on fire, potentially due to wearing 2 layers.

WHAT CAN BE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO PREVENT A SIMILAR INCIDENT FROM OCCURRING?



HOUSEKEEPING & ORDER

- ▶ Housekeeping was not a factor in this incident



POSITIONS OF PEOPLE

- ▶ Employee was positioned in close proximity to where weld spatter was being created. Depending on the welding activity this position may not be able to be adjusted.



PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

No lightweight (thin cotton) clothing to be worn by maintenance personnel. Only heavy weight.

Personal Protective clothing to be worn at all times when carrying out welding activities (Procedure developed), use of leather apron, jacket and spats (Knee Length) along with other identified PPE.



RULES & PROCEDURES

- ▶ There was no system of work on site for the wearing of personal protective equipment when carrying out welding activities.



TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- ▶ The welding activity being carried out generates welding spatter which can be released from the welding activity.
- ▶ There were no issues identified with the welding activity at the time of the incident.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

HSE Representative:	Paul Gebert
Contact Number:	0417742845
Date of Issue:	11/03/2020

Report all incidents and near misses

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.