

# WELDING SAFETY

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## WELDING SAFETY DEPENDS ON YOU

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, THINK BEFORE YOU ACT AND BE CAREFUL.**

### 1. ELECTRIC SHOCK CAN KILL

- a. The electrode and work (or ground) circuits are electrically "hot" when the welder is on. Do not touch these "hot" parts with your bare skin or wet clothing. Wear dry, hole-free gloves to insulate hands.
- b. In semi-automatic and automatic wire welding, the electrode, electrode reel, welding head and nozzle or semi-automatic welding gun are also electrically "hot".
- c. Insulate yourself from work and ground using dry insulation. When welding in damp locations, on metal framework such as floors, gratings or scaffolds, and when in positions such as sitting or Lying, make certain the insulation is large enough to cover your full area of physical contact with work and ground.
- d. Always be sure the work cable makes a good electrical connection with the metal being welded. The connection should be as close as possible to the area being welded.
- e. Ground the work or metal to be welded to a good electrical (earth) ground.
- f. Maintain the electrode holder, work clamp, welding cable and welding machine in good, safe operating condition. Replace damaged insulation.
- g. Never dip the electrode holder in water for cooling.
- h. Never simultaneously touch electrically "hot" parts of electrode holders connected to two welders because voltage between the two can be the total of the open circuit voltage of both welders.
- i. When working above floor level, protect yourself from a fall should you get a shock.
- j. Also see items 4c and 6.

### 2. FUMES AND GASES CAN BE DANGEROUS

- a. Welding may produce fumes and gases hazardous to health. Avoid breathing these fumes and gases.  
When welding, keep your head out of the fume. Use enough ventilation and/or exhaust at the arc to keep fumes and gases away from the breathing zone. When welding on galvanised, lead or cadmium plated steel and other metals which produce toxic fumes, even greater care must be taken.
- b. Do not weld in locations near chlorinated hydrocarbon vapours coming from degreasing, cleaning or spraying operations. The heat and rays of the arc can react with solvent vapours to form phosgene, a highly toxic gas, and other irritating products.
- c. Shielding gases used for Arc Metal Welding can displace air and cause injury or death. Always use enough ventilation, especially in confined areas, to ensure breathing air is safe.
- d. Read and understand the manufacturer's instructions for this equipment and the consumables to be used, including the material safety data sheet (MSDS) and follow your employer's safety practices.
- e. Also see Item 7b.

### 3. ARC RAYS CAN BURN

- a. Use a shield with the proper filter and cover plates to protect your eyes from sparks and the rays of the arc when welding or observing open Arc Metal Welding. Head shield and filter lens should conform to AS 1674.2-1990 standards.
- b. Use suitable clothing made from durable flame resistant material to protect your skin and that of your helpers from the arc rays.
- c. Protect other nearby personnel with suitable non flammable screening and/or warn them not to watch the arc or expose themselves to the arc rays or to hot spatter or metal.

#### **4. WELDING SPARKS CAN CAUSE A FIRE OR AN EXPLOSION**

- a. Remove fire hazards from the welding area. If this is not possible, cover them to prevent the welding sparks from starting a fire. Remember that welding sparks and hot materials from welding can easily go through small cracks and openings to adjacent areas. Have a fire extinguisher readily available.
- b. Where compressed gases are to be used at the job site, special precautions should be used to prevent hazardous situations.
- c. When not welding, make certain no part of the electrode circuit is touching the work or ground. Accidental contact can cause overheating and create a fire hazard.
- d. Do not heat, cut or weld tanks, drums or containers until the proper steps have been taken to insure that such procedures will not cause flammable or toxic vapours from substances inside. These can cause an explosion even though the vessel has been "cleaned".
- e. Vent hollow castings or containers before heating, cutting or welding. They may explode.
- f. Sparks and spatter are thrown from the welding arc. Wear oil free protective garments such as leather gloves, heavy shirt, cuffless trousers, high shoes and a cap over your hair. Wear ear plugs when welding out of position or in confined places. Always wear safety glasses with side shields when in a welding area.
- g. Connect the work cable to the work as close to the welding area as possible. Work cables connected to the building framework or other locations away from the welding area increase the possibility of the welding current passing through lifting chains, crane cables or other alternate circuits. This can create fire hazards or overheat lifting chains or cables until they fail.

#### **5. A CYLINDER MAY EXPLODE IF DAMAGED**

- a. Use only compressed gas cylinders containing the correct shielding gas for the process used and properly operating regulators, designed for the gas and pressure used. All hoses, fittings, etc. should be suitable for the application and maintained in good condition.
- b. Always keep cylinders in an upright position and securely chained to an undercarriage or fixed support.
- c. Cylinders should be located:
  - Away from areas where they may be struck or subjected to physical damage.
  - A safe distance from Arc Metal Welding or cutting operations and any other source of heat, sparks or flame.
- d. Never allow the electrode, electrode holder, or any other electrically "hot" parts to touch a cylinder.
- e. Keep your head and face away from the cylinder valve outlet when opening the cylinder valve.
- f. Valve protection caps should always be in place and hand-tight except when the cylinder is in use or connected for use.

#### **6. FOR ELECTRICALLY POWERED EQUIPMENT**

- a. Turn off input power using the disconnect switch at the fuse box before working on the equipment.
- b. Install equipment in accordance with the SAA Wiring Rules, all local codes and the manufacturer's recommendations.
- c. Earth the equipment in accordance with the SAA Wiring Rules and the manufacturer's recommendations.

#### **7. FOR ENGINE POWERED EQUIPMENT**

- a. Turn the engine off before troubleshooting and maintenance work unless the maintenance work requires it to be running.
- b. Operate engines in open, well ventilated areas or vent the engine exhaust fumes outdoors.
- c. Do not add fuel near an open flame, welding arc or when the engine is running. Stop the engine and

allow it to cool before refuelling to prevent spilled fuel from vaporizing on contact with hot engine parts and igniting. Do not spill fuel when filling tank. If fuel is spilled, wipe it up and do not start engine until fumes have been eliminated.

- d. Keep all equipment, safety guards, covers and devices in position and in good repair. Keep hands, hair, clothing and tools away from V-belts, gears, fans and all other moving parts when starting, operating or repairing equipment.
  - e. In some cases it may be necessary to remove safety guards to perform required maintenance. Remove guards only when necessary and replace them when the maintenance requiring their removal is complete. Always use the greatest care when working near moving parts.
  - f. Do not put your hands near the engine fan. Do not attempt to override the governor or idler by pushing on the throttle control rods while the engine is running.
  - g. To prevent accidentally starting petrol engines while turning the engine or welding generator during maintenance work, disconnect the spark plug wires, distributor cap or magnet wire as appropriate.
  - h. To avoid scalding do not remove the radiator pressure cap when the engine is hot.
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