

## Oxygen near-miss

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A Member reports the following near miss whereby a worker was observed blowing oxygen into the welding hood of a co worker who was welding on a pipe. This was stopped immediately.

### What happened?

All three occupants of the tented area where work was taking place were interviewed and stated that the welder's hood was 'fogging up' and that the oxygen was being used to keep the lens clear. It was then explained to them that the potential existed for a flash fire in the welder's clothes, under his hood and in his lungs as a result of the high concentration of oxygen in those areas.

### The company involved has taken the following actions:

- Immediate stoppage of work.
- Instructions to the prime contractor to conduct a safety 'stand down' with its sub-contractor immediately and with its own key personnel when they returned to work the following Monday.
- Inclusion of this subject matter in site-specific training for all newly employed workers on the project.
- Instructions to other sub-contractors doing similar work to have safety 'stand downs' to get this important message across.

The company notes that although oxygen in normal concentrations is necessary to sustain life, it can also be potentially hazardous in concentrations above normal breathing amounts or in conditions where high levels of heat or a major ignition source are present.

The company has restated the importance making clear potential hazards at each worksite through training and familiarisation and noted the danger of assuming awareness of 'obvious' hazards.

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