

HAZARD ALERT

WORKER BURNED WHEN METAL DRUM EXPLODES

A municipal worker suffered second-degree burns to his arm and torso while using a grinder to cut open a 45-gallon metal drum. The worker was trying to modify the drum into a waste container.

An investigation determined the worker thought the drum was empty and safe to cut. When the grinder pierced the drum, sparks ignited the residual toluene vapours, causing the explosion.

Recommended Preventive Measures

1. Use plastic drums or drums with removable lids as waste containers, instead of modifying metal drums for this purpose.
2. If cutting metal drums:
 - Comply with appropriate sections of the *Regulation** regarding welding, cutting, burning and soldering operations on containers.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for any flammable or combustible substances, including not performing any "hot" work – such as welding, brazing, grinding, or torch cutting – on drums that contain flammable or combustible substances.
 - Provide employees with the information, training, and supervision necessary to ensure their safety when working with flammable or combustible substances.
 - Ensure material safety data sheets (MSDSs) are followed for all hazardous and flammable substances used in the workplace.



* Part XVIII of *General Regulation 91-191*