



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region**

Notice No. 004

January 9, 1973

**OCS Operations Safety Alert
Flash Fire--Cutting and Welding**

Two flash fires occurred recently on OCS installations. Both fires originated from welding operations.

One of these fires resulted when welding sparks and slag ignited control supply gas which was leaking from an O-ring seal on the actuator of a surface safety valve. The other fire resulted when welding sparks and slag ignited a partially filled drum of methanol. Both fires were controlled immediately by use of portable dry chemical extinguishers. Even though these fires were of short duration and property damage was not significant, there were personnel injuries involved.

The below listed recommendations which resulted from the investigation should be reviewed by all operators for applicability to their particular OCS installations and operational procedures.

1. These documents should be consulted in order to establish procedures and precautions which are necessary in the performance of safe cutting and welding operations. (1) API RP 2009 "Safe Practices in Gas and Electric Cutting and Welding," (2) National Fire Protection Association Bulletin No. 51B "Cutting and Welding Processes 1971," (3) Offshore Operators Committee, "Manual of Safe Practices in Offshore Operations."
2. Prior to performing any cutting or welding outside of an approved fire safe area, a work permit should be obtained from the individual responsible for authorizing the work. Prior to issuing this permit, the work location should be inspected by the responsible individual to insure that the area is safe for cutting and welding operations. Detailed information on the scope of the area inspection may be obtained from the above listed documents.
3. All equipment used in the operation, cutting and welding apparatus, gas and vapor detection equipment, and fire extinguishing equipment, should be maintained in good operating condition.
4. A periodic review of safety precautions relating to cutting and welding operations and a review of firefighting techniques are necessary training for field personnel.
5. Fire extinguishing equipment must be inspected frequently and completely to insure that it will be in working condition when needed.

[signed]Robert F. Evans

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