

# FATALGRAM

## ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Date of Accident: July 18, 2004

### **Fuel storage drum explodes, victim engulfed in flames.**

**Description of Accident:** A sixty-one year old male was in the process of cutting the top off of an empty five hundred gallon drum with an oxygen/acetylene torch. The drum had previously been used as a fuel storage tank. The victim was standing in front of the fuel drum as he was cutting off the top. Fumes from left over hydrocarbons exploded, peeled the top of the drum over and engulfed the victim in flames. The victim died as a result of the burns he sustained.

### **ACCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- To avoid explosions while welding, purge the tank with nitrogen and continue to purge during the cutting process.
- Train employees on correct procedures for nitrogen purging tanks, barrels, pipes, etc.
- Before initiating the cutting process, the competent person responsible for cutting shall inspect the area and document the inspection.
- Workers exposed to hazards created by welding or cutting operations shall be protected by personal protective equipment.
- An employer should have a written safety program which includes enforcement and discipline procedures to ensure that employees follow the employer's safety requirements. The employer should take steps to discover employee violations and document disciplinary action taken.