

# 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*