

SAFETY ALERT



ARTC NSW No. 17

Issued: 1/9/06

PRE-HEATING TORCH “BLOW-BACK”

Incident:-

An employee had commenced pre-heating a section of rail line prior to performing head repair work. Pre-heating had been in progress for approximately 1 minute when the Operator heard a “popping” sound emanating from the heating hand piece. The Operator withdrew the heating gun and commenced to turn off the gas in order to inspect the gun. The Operator started to feel heat through welders glove. Operator dropped gun and a section of the gun “blew out”. The gas was turned off.

Investigation Findings:-

All gas equipment visually inspected prior to usage on the day.
Gas lines purged prior to igniting
Torch ignited in the normal manner
First pre-heating job of the day
Flash back arrestors fitted at gas bottle end and at torch end

Contributing Factors:-

Heating gun being used for the first time with flash back arrestor fitted – possibly problems with pressure.
Unusual event – flash back has occurred in the past but not with this result

Action required:-

All employees who use this type of equipment to be advised of this incident
All gas equipment used for pre-heating purposes to be visually inspected prior to use.
Employees using gas equipment for pre-heating or cutting purposes to ensure correct gas pressures are being used
Any unusual sounds emanating from the torch assembly should indicate problem and that Gases be turned off immediately.
Any gas equipment that has been involved in a flash back is to be immediately removed from service and properly inspected by an authorised person.
Flash back arresters to be serviced and tested every 12 months.
(see attached photos)