Safety Alert

SAFELY REMOVING EXCESS SLAG DURING ALUMINOTHERMIC WELDING

Incident

This alert has been issued following an injury to an ARTC worker on the Interstate Network.

The team were performing an Aluminothermic weld. After pouring the Aluminothermic weld, the welder allowed the weld to cool and with the help of the welders assistant, removed the top portion of the weld moulds.

Immediately after removing the head of the weld, the welder's assistant picked up the weld shears to place over the weld. At this point the welder noticed slag on the head of the rail and proceeded to chip it off with the hot axe/cold set. The piece of hot slag (which was about the size of a 10c piece) became airborne and landed just above a worker's safety boot burning through the sock and subsequently burning the right leg approximately the size of a 50c piece, above the inside ankle.

All workers are reminded that if using this method to remove slag from the head of the rail they are to ensure that a barrier is placed (for example a shovel) to ensure that the slag does not become airborne. Additionally workers are reminded to communicate their actions to surrounding personnel so all are aware of the potential of flying debris and consider the implementation of an exclusion zone.

A review of the Work Method Statement for Aluminothermic welding is currently underway and changes will be forwarded to teams as soon as the review is complete.

For your action

1. Place Safety Alert on display and make copies of this alert available to people who report to you (without regular email access) and ensure that the contents of the safety alert are discussed/explained to your staff.

2. Ensure a method of sign-off is obtained (eg via tool-box/safety meetings/morning briefings etc) to verify that the safety alert has been distributed and discussed.

3. If you have any safety concerns with this Safety Alert, please speak directly to your supervisor.

Further information

All safety alerts issued can be found here.