

Date: Sat, 18 Apr 1998 09:30:36 -0400
From: eub@ornl.gov (Cynthia M. Eubanks)
Subject: Yellow Alert: Fire Watch and Readily Available Fire Extinguisher

The following Lockheed Martin Energy Systems, East Tennessee Technology Park Yellow Alert is issued to re-emphasize the importance of the fire watch responsibilities and the use of fire extinguisher equipment. If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Schutt (s6u@ornl.gov) at (423)574-1248.

Cynthia M. Eubanks

TITLE: Fire Watch and Readily Available Fire Extinguisher

IDENTIFIER: Y-1998-OR-LMESETTP-0303

DATE: March 26, 1998

LESSONS LEARNED STATEMENT: The lack of a fire watch and/or a readily available fire extinguisher, with current inspections, are serious deficiencies.

DISCUSSION: While visiting two different projects being performed at the East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP), a Department of Energy (DOE) Safety Engineer identified two separate welding/fire watch deficiencies.

The first identified deficiency dealt with a subcontractor who was working on a structure located in a river. While he was welding, his fire watch walked off the structure, leaving him without a fire watch. Further investigation and discussion of the incident indicated the individual serving as fire watch had other duties he was performing while serving as fire watch. It was also noted that the fire watch did not have a fire extinguisher that was readily available on the structure. An extinguisher was available at the site; however, it was up the hill and across rough terrain on the river bank. This was a considerable distance from the site of the welding.

The second identified deficiency dealt with personnel who were performing cutting operations, using a torch on hoppers approximately 10 feet above ground. The workers were using proper fall protection (safety harness with lanyard), wetting the work surface below as the cutting took place, wearing protection (welding sleeves and/or jacket), and wearing leather gloves when handling the metal sections. However, the fire watch did not have a fire extinguisher readily available for use. The workers were located on an elevated surface and the nearest fire extinguisher was approximately 40 feet away on the roof.

ANALYSIS:

RESOLUTION/RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

* To resolve the first deficiency, the situation was discussed with the individual performing as the fire watch and the Safety Representative. It was agreed that a fire watch has one specific duty and should not be performing other aspects of the job. A fire watch trained laborer was to be

reassigned to perform the function of fire watch. Also, a fire extinguisher with current inspection was to be maintained on site near any hot work operations and readily available for use.

* To resolve the second deficiency, a fire extinguisher was secured to the scaffolding platform where it was readily accessible to the trained fire watch.

* In both instances, the incidents were reviewed with the fire watch personnel to ensure they fully understood their duties and that they are responsible for having the appropriate fire extinguisher nearby in order to perform the fire watch function.

* This lessons learned should be reviewed with all employees performing similar activities as a reminder of the responsibilities of all employees (including the fire watch) when performing this type of work.

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PRIORITY DESCRIPTOR: Yellow/Caution

DOE FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: Occupational Safety

LMES FUNCTIONAL CATEGORY: SH - Safety and Health

KEYWORDS: fire watch, fire extinguisher, hot work, welding

REFERENCES: "ETTP Safety Gram", DOE, ETPP Site Office FP-111 "Welding, Burning, and Hotwork Outside of an Approved Fixed Weld Shop" (7/97). Training Module TMS #10389, "Fire Watch For Burning, Welding and Hot-Work"

FOLLOW-UP ACTION: Information in this report is accurate to the best of our knowledge. As means of measuring the effectiveness of this report please notify Joanne E. Schutt at 423/574-1248, e-mail at s6u@ornl.gov of any action taken as a result of this report or of any technical inaccuracies you find. Your feedback is important and appreciated. Cynthia M. Eubanks, eub@ornl.gov Performance/Quality Assurance Org. Bechtel Jacobs Company, LLC Phone: (423)576-7763; Pager = 873-6968 Fax: (423)574-5398