

WELDING SAFETY

OSHA revised the welding, cutting and brazing standard in 1990. The general requirements explain what is necessary for fire protection, personnel protection and health protection. A short overview follows:

Fire prevention and protection:

- if the object to be welded or cut cannot be readily moved, all movable fire hazards in the vicinity should be removed
- if the object to be welded or cut cannot be readily moved and fire hazards cannot be eliminated, guards should be used to separate the two. If this is not possible, welding or cutting *must not be performed*
- fire extinguishers must be placed in the immediate vicinity for instant use
- fire watchers must be posted whenever welding or cutting is performed where more than a minor fire could occur
- management must recognize its responsibility for the safe usage of welding and cutting equipment by:
 - a. establishing areas for cutting and welding within the facility, and establishing procedures for cutting and welding
 - b. designating an individual responsible for authorizing cutting and welding in areas not specifically designed for those processes
 - c. insisting that supervisors, cutters and welders are trained in the safe operation of their equipment and the safe use of the process
 - d. advising all contractors about flammable materials or hazardous conditions

Protection of personnel:

- a welder or helper working on platforms, scaffolds or runways must be protected against falling
- welding cable and other equipment must be placed away from passageways, ladders and stairways
- proper eye protection must be provided for welders and helpers or attendants
- protective clothing must be worn by employees exposed to hazards created by welding or cutting
- work in confined spaces must have adequate ventilation and proper procedures must be followed

Health protection and ventilation:

- when welding must be performed in a space screened on all four sides, the screens may not restrict any existing ventilation
- local exhaust or general ventilating systems must keep the amount of toxic fumes, gases or dusts below the permissible exposure levels

It is recommended that www.osha.gov/SLTC/weldingcuttingbrazing/index.html referred to for further information. ***Should more information be needed, please call the Composites One's Department of Health, Safety & Environment at 800/621-8003.***