

Makeshift Ladder Explodes!

An apprentice mechanic, working part-time with a transport company, was working when a drum of windshield washer antifreeze exploded. The explosion was set off by a spark from his welding.

The investigation into this death determined the mechanic was likely welding while standing on top of a drum containing methyl hydrate (concentrated windshield washer anti-freeze). The explosion threw him into the side of a nearby tractor-trailer. He died instantly of a skull fracture and extensive third degree burns.

Further investigation showed the drum had been improperly labeled. It did not indicate methyl hydrate was flammable or explosive. In fact, the report showed the employees and managerial staff of the transport company did not know methyl hydrate was an explosive.

Makeshift ladders are responsible for more injuries than just falls. In this case, the worker was standing on the drum of explosive material instead of a proper ladder or scaffold.

If you have windshield washer fluid stored at work or at home, remember it is flammable and explosive. Handle it with care and caution.