Sparks Set Off Hydraulic Fluid

The shipyard welder was welding on a barge in dry dock when sparks from her wire-fed welding gun ignited hydraulic fluid that had atomized. During the fire she fell to the floor of the welding platform. Lowering it to rescue her from the cage was delayed by confusion over location and operation of emergency valves on the high lift. Burns covered 80 percent of her body and she died from an infection.

The 48-year-old welder was experienced in her job. She had signed a document indicating she had been trained to operate forklifts.

Federal OSHA investigated but did not issue citations. It made these recommendations:

- *Ensure that equipment is appropriate for the task and maintained it's manufacturer's specifications.*
- *Check all hydraulic equipment daily.*
- *Protect hydraulic lines from damage.*
- *Know how to operate all safety equipment.*

Source: Oregon Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 030R022