

The Independent Shop's Guide to Welding Safety and Health

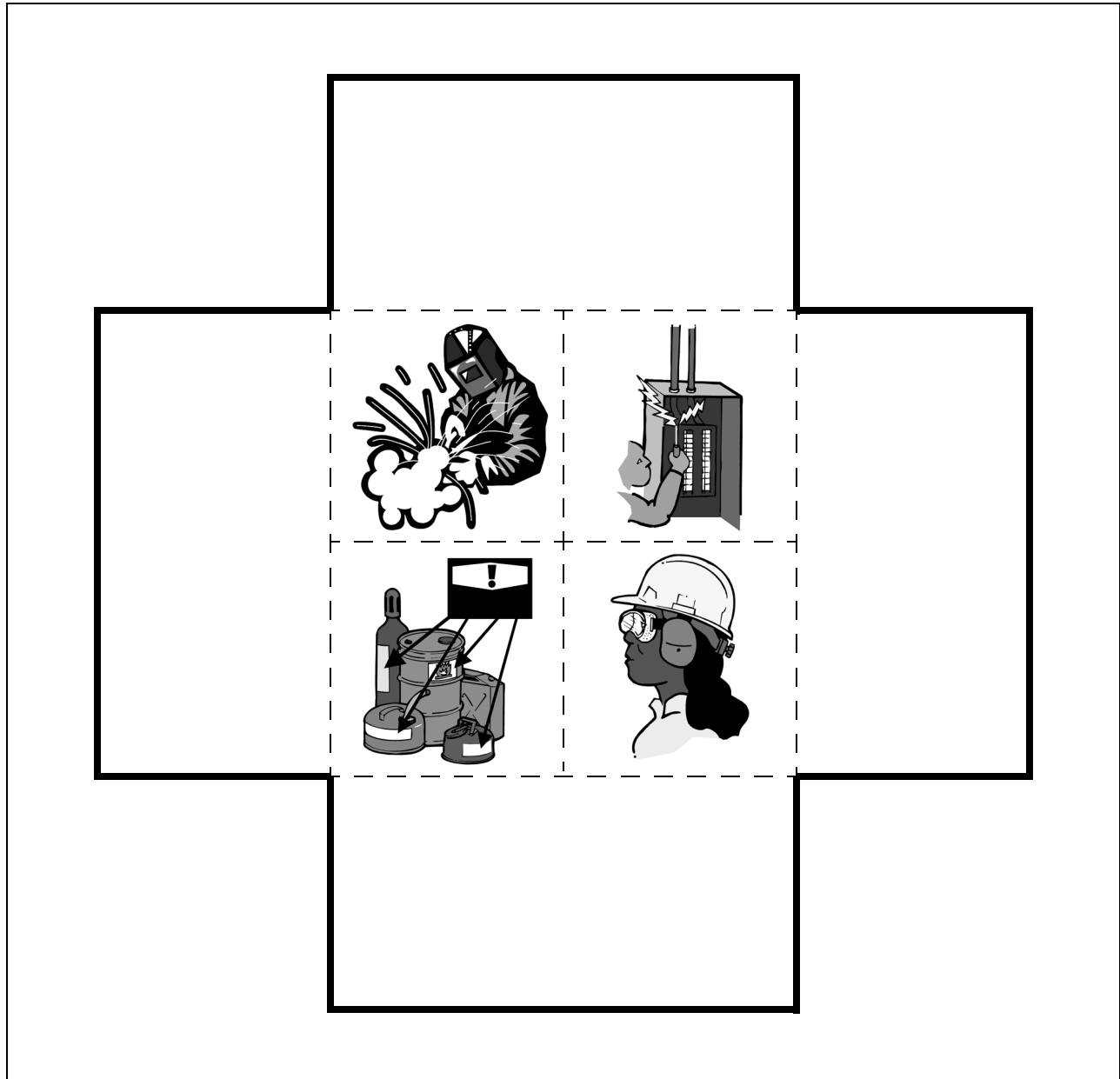


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Introduction

The purpose of this publication is to provide the owners of small welding and cutting shops with a practical guide to help ensure the safety and health of employees and the protection of property. The maintenance of the health and safety of employees is vital to the successful operation of any business. Healthy and safe workers are productive and contribute to the profitability of the business. Conversely, workers exposed to unhealthy and unsafe work environments can be costly to a business through decreased productivity, absenteeism, increased medical expenses, increased property damage, and fines up to a maximum allowable penalty of \$70,000.00¹ for a willful or repeated safety or health violation.

This document describes the common potential health and safety hazards that may be present in a small welding and cutting shop and provides practical advice on protecting workers and property. It should be understood that not every potential hazard can be addressed in an overview publication, but additional sources of help are identified throughout the publication. Some aspects of health and safety, for example the assessment of worker exposures to welding fumes, may require personnel with professional training and equipment not normally employed in an independent shop. The shop owner may have to hire professional assistance in certain circumstances. When outside assistance is necessary, AWS recommends the shop owner consider engaging a Certified Safety Professional (see "Websites," page 23).

How to Use This Guide

Study the information carefully. There are a series of emphasis blocks, each identified by an icon. These blocks will summarize the situation, directly and quickly. Examples follow of the different types of blocks and what you will find in them:

1. A willful violation is defined by OSHA as one committed with an intentional disregard of, or plain indifference to, the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (1970) and regulations. The maximum fine that can be proposed for a willful violation is \$70,000.



Helpful Hints

In this type of box, you will find advice on avoiding the problem/hazard or simple ways to deal with the topic under discussion.



Rapid Review

Information in this type of box is a summary and is generally found at the end of each subject area.



Technical Tips

In this type of box, you will find additional technical information that helps explain the topic under discussion.



Fundamentals

In this type of box, you will find basic things you need to know about the topic under discussion.

What is OSHA?

OSHA stands for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Since 1970, OSHA has published requirements, called *regulations*, that spell out what safety measures must be taken for a variety of situations. They also are enforcers of these requirements and have the power to fine employers who fail to comply. And keep in mind that ignorance of the regulations is *not* an accepted excuse. If you violate, you are fined. Period. OSHA sets the requirements and assesses fines. Fines range up to \$70,000 per incident. Fines are adjusted for the size of the company and if the company is making a good faith effort to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

OSHA publishes its regulations to ensure safe and healthy working conditions. OSHA has contributed toward the 50% decline in work-related fatalities and 40% decline in occupational injuries in the U.S. since its establishment. It has accomplished this goal by requiring that information, practice train-