

FATAL ALERT

May 8, 2005

On May 8, 2005, a crew of three, a painter, an attendant and a supervisor were in the process of applying a paint/liner product on the interior of a rail tank car in an enclosed shop. The painter was inside the tank car and the attendant was standing on top of the railcar at the manhole. The supervisor had just stepped into his office when a loud explosion occurred. Flammable vapors had accumulated in the tank car and the shop. The attendant was blown from the top of the rail car to the floor of the shop but was basically unharmed.

The painter was burned over 90% of his body. He was transported to a burn center and survived for just over 48 hours but passed away shortly after. He died as a result of fatal burns suffered in the explosion.

Significant Factors

- The electrical system of the paint spray area did not meet the requirements for a Class I, Group D location
- No means of mechanical ventilation was being used during the spraying operation
- No measures had been taken to ensure that all electrically conductive objects in the spraying area had been adequately grounded

Recommendations

- All employees should be briefed on the facts and circumstances of this fatal accident
- Anytime a new process is developed and implemented, all hazards need to be identified, investigated and addressed
- A proper electrical system, ventilation and grounding requirements need to be addressed in a paint spraying area
- Employer needs to ensure that procedures are followed per written policies and procedures
- Rescue procedures need to be developed and practiced to ensure proficiency in case of an emergency
- OSHA rules / procedures for confined space entry need to be strictly followed