

## **FATAL ALERT**

On October 30, 2014 an employee working for a company that reclaims used oil was welding a catwalk onto the top of a 12,000 gallon used oil tank that contained approximately 750 gallons of reclaimed lubricating oil. The employee was working approximately 20 feet above the lower ground level and was not using fall protection. When vapors from the tank were ignited during the welding process, the employee was thrown into the air. The employee died from blunt force trauma from the fall of approximately 30 feet.

### **Significant Factors:**

- Fall Protection was not being used while at heights above six feet.
- Monitoring for an explosive atmospheres around the tank was not conducted prior to/during the welding activities.
- The employer did not have a hot work program in place.
- No training had been provided to employees regarding the hazards associated with welding activities around tanks that contained hydrocarbon product and flammable vapors.

### **Recommendations:**

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal incident.
- Provide training to all employees on the hazards of the worksite and methods to be used to avoid the hazards.
- Assess work environments for combustible/flammable/explosive atmospheres prior to allowing welding activities to occur.
- Ensure flammable/explosive atmospheres are assessed using properly maintained monitoring equipment prior to allowing any welding activities.
- Implement a hot work program.
- Brief employees on the need for fall protection.
- Ensure that safety meetings are being conducted prior to the start of all projects to discuss the work to be performed, identifying the potential hazards and implementing safe work procedures to control/avoid the hazards.