

SAFETY MEMO

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Did you know?

Issue

Welding is an essential and ubiquitous method of construction in industrial settings. The welding operation comes with a number of inherent risks, exposing people to harmful levels of Ultraviolet (UV) light as well as the risk of flash burns, and high temperatures. One to the most useful and versatile safety tools is the welding screen. The use of welding screens is a precaution that can lower the risk for others in near the welding operation.

Welding screens or curtains can create customized enclosed areas for the purpose of welding. They are easily portable and can be conveniently placed in the location of the welding operation. Screens are often fitted with wheels and can be moved quickly and easily from one welding area to another.

Welding screens are generally constructed of strong polyvinyl chloride (PVC). These screens also contain flame retardant chemicals to prevent them from igniting in the case of contact with stray sparks from the welding operation.

Generally screens are translucent providing some visibility to the surroundings which can be useful in areas where other activity is going on allowing welders to be aware of other hazards such as forklifts or other moving equipment that may be in the area. The colors and type of screen are suited to different types of welding and provide differing levels of protection.



Figure 1: A welder working behind a welding screen.

Benefits of Welding Screens

- **Create defined welding areas**
Welding screens can create a definitive boundary around the area in which welding is taking place. This can help to prevent others from entering the working area.
- **Noise reduction**
High levels of noise are a consequence of some types of welding. When positioned well, welding screens can reduce the noise levels by creating a barrier between the welder and the rest of the facility.
- **Temperature control**
The welding operation produces extremely high temperatures. Welders wear specialized PPE to protect themselves. Welding screens placed around the welding area reduce risks due to high temperatures by preventing others from coming too close to the welding operation.
- **Reduction of harmful UV light**
Welding screens effectively act as filters which reduce the levels of UV light that can pass through and protecting others from exposure to harmful UV light.
- **Protection from flash burns**
Flash burn is a painful inflammation of the cornea which occurs when exposed to bright UV light. It can be caused by any type of UV light but welding is the most common source of this type of injury. Welding screens provide a visual barrier to the welding operation and reduces the risk of this type of injury to others in the facility.

Recommendations

Welding Screens are an effective tool to protect workers from the variety of risks associated with the welding operation. In areas where the work environment is allowed, it is recommended that portable welding screens be utilized to create a barrier between the welding operation and the rest of the facility.

