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SUBJECT: Disposable Butane Lighters

AFFECTED CODES/ DIRECTIVES: NONE

(1) PURPOSE: To inform OR-OSHA personnel of the status of investigations of butane lighter explosions.

(2) BACKGROUND: Rumors of fatalities and other injuries due to explosion of disposable butane lighters continue to be heard. The alleged incidents center particularly on welding operations. The January 1980 issue of the National Safety News (page 38) states that so far the reports of deaths have not been substantiated. However, some incidents of burns were reported. OSHA has retracted their alert on butane lighters after being unable to substantiate two alleged serious accidents.

It is apparent that the plastic bodied lighters can be damaged by heat and that combustion of portions of the lighter and its fuel is possible. (Ref.: RECAP, Vol. 140), March 1980)

(3) ACTION: Welders and other employees should be advised that butane lighters, like other compressed gas containers, should not be subjected to temperatures above 1300F, and should not be allowed to come in contact with flames or hot objects which might damage the lighter and ignite the butane fuel. The lack of evidence supporting an association of disposable butane lighters with serious injuries must be considered when evaluating a situation involving these devices.

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