

# HAZARD ALERT

Industry: Water transportation

Age: 45 years

Experience: 15 years

Area: Northern B.C.

## Welder dies from lack of oxygen in compartment of barge hull

A welder entered a flotation compartment of a barge hull to check for cracks. Another worker noticed the welder was missing and found him unconscious in the compartment. After calling for help, he also entered the compartment. Three other workers entered the compartment one at a time to attempt rescue. All four would-be rescuers lost consciousness.

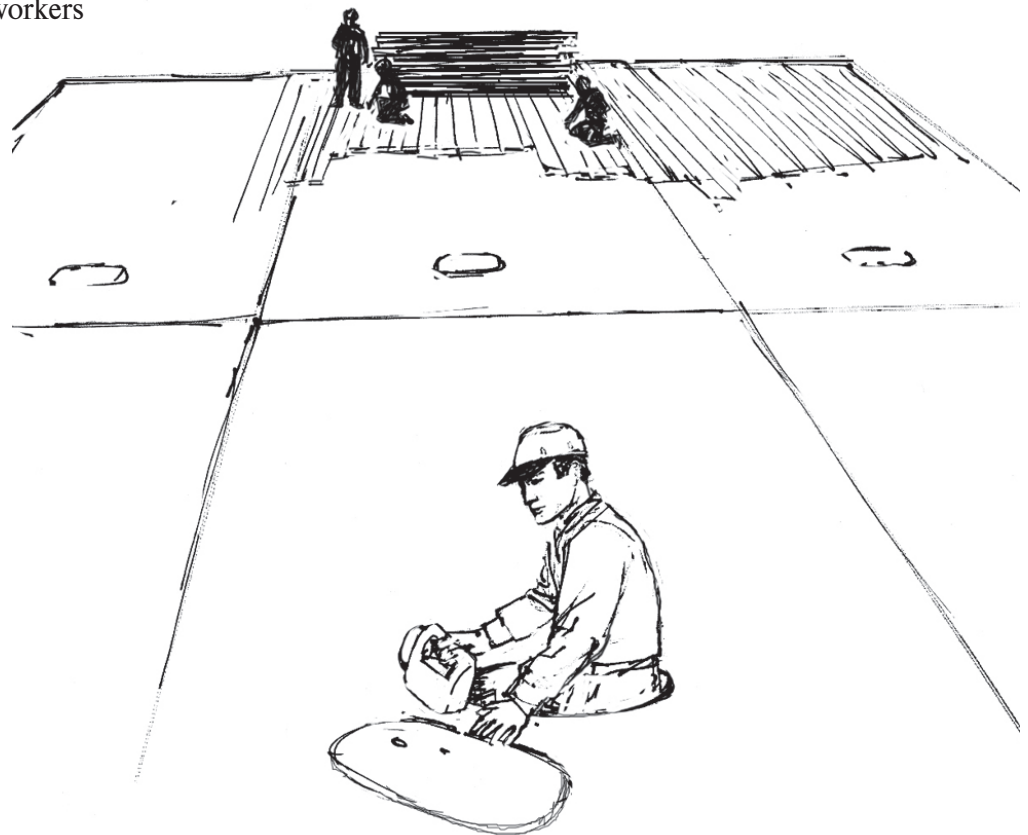
Other workers used a rope to remove the unconscious workers. The welder who originally entered the compartment could not be revived. The four workers who attempted rescue all recovered.

An investigation revealed that the sealed compartment of the barge hull did not have enough oxygen to sustain life as a result of corrosion of the steel walls. The flotation compartment of a barge is considered a confined space. Confined spaces may contain hazardous atmospheres such as oxygen deficiency or toxic gases.

All work in confined spaces must follow the requirements of Part 9 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

### Safe work practices:

- Identify all confined spaces that workers may encounter in the workplace.
- Before entering a confined space, always test the air. If practical, carry a gas monitor with you while working inside the space.
- Ensure fresh air is being supplied into the confined space by ventilation.
- Have a trained standby person available when a worker enters a confined space.
- Ensure that rescue procedures and equipment are in place before any worker enters a confined space and that rescuers are properly trained.
- Have a prime contractor responsible for health and safety on a multiple-employer worksite.



FATALITY  
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