

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES HEAVY ORGANICS DIVISION

SAFETY NEWSLETTER NUMBER 2

By Trevor Kletz

2/1 PERMIT-TO-WORK

Two recent incidents, both of which might have had serious results, though fortunately no-one was injured, are described below. The incidents might, perhaps, have happened elsewhere in the Division and you may like to check that the instructions and practices on your Works would prevent them occurring.

In the first incident a plumber assistant foreman had been given a Permit-to-Work to modify a pipeline. At 4.30 p.m. the plumbers went home intending to complete the job on the following day. During the evening the process supervisor wished to use the line that the plumbers were working on. He checked that the line was safe to use and he asked the shift fitter to sign off the Permit-to-Work. The next morning the plumbers, not knowing that the shift fitter had signed off their Permit, started working on the line while it was in use.

How can we prevent this incident happening again?

4/4 We should make it quite clear in our Instructions that Permits-to-Work can only be signed off by the supervisor to whom they are issued (or another supervisor of the same trade and responsible for the same area who is doing the job of the original supervisor).

4/4 If maintenance supervisors remove the top copies of the Permits to-Work from the books, then it is difficult for an unauthorised person to get hold of them and sign them off. (On the other hand, if all Permits are left in the books, why have two copies?)

4/4 One Works is experimenting with a scheme in which each Permit-to-Work is put in a polythene bag and attached to the job. We shall be interested to see how this works.

In the second incident two relief valves, identical in appearance, were removed from a plant during a shutdown and sent to the workshops for overhaul. One relief valve was set to operate at 15 p.s.i. and the other at 30 p.s.i. The pressures were stamped on the flanges. The tie-on labels on the two valves became interchanged and the valves were installed wrongly.

When re-installing relief valves do your supervisors check the stampings on the valve bodies or just the labels?

2/2 NITROGEN BLANKETTING TANKS.

Nitrogen is often lost through broken seal glasses on the foam lines. A number of experiments have been carried out with different sealing rings and it has been found that seals made from Viton "A" are the most satisfactory. They can be obtained from Walker Bros. of Middlesbrough.

2/3 PNEUMATIC CUTTER GRINDER

Sparks produced by cutter grinders are not usually considered hot enough to ignite an explosive mixture of gases other than hydrogen. Nevertheless, sparks from a pneumatic cutter grinder recently ignited some oil soaked ground about 6 ft. away. There was no obvious oil spillage but the ground was later found to contain 8% oil. Cutter grinders must now be considered a serious source of ignition and steps must be taken to remove all flammable material from nearby and to prevent sparks going further afield.

2/4 JUBILEE CLIPS

In Newsletter No. 1 I reported that a man had been injured when a hose came off its end fitting because it had been secured by a Jubilee clip. Since then another man has been injured in the same way. This time it was an air hose that burst and the end of the hose hit someone in the eye.

2/5 BELIEVE IT OR NOT.

A man looked for a hose to wash some dirt off his Wellington boots. He found one connected to a plant and started to use it. Some of the "water" got into his boots; unfortunately it was caustic soda solution. Before we laugh are we sure it couldn't happen elsewhere?

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