Fire: flammable substance close to oxy-propane cutting activity

WHAT HAPPENED

A conveyor was to be removed from the location where it was situated and was to be subsequently relocated in a new position. As part of the dismantling process, a canopy needed to be removed. The maintenance engineer utilised oxy-Propane cutting equipment to cut the canopy away from the conveyor structure.

An oil drum storage bund was situated within a few metres and spilled oil had accumulated in the catch-tray. The maintenance engineer believed the oil to be water based and non-flammable. This assumption was incorrect.

As cutting commenced, sparks landed in the spill tray igniting the oil. The fire caused localised damage, however; the proximity of the bund to the access stairs used by the engineer to the workplace meant the fire trapped him temporarily. A colleague positioned a ladder permitting his escape.



canopy



oil storage bund

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

- Before any hot work assess the area for potentially flammable substances.

- Conduct a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

- Complete a permit to work appropriate to the task.

- Ensure you have an effective escape route available to you.

LOCATION:	**COMPANY-WIDE**	**ALERT STATUS:**	**Normal**
ACTIVITY:	**MAINTENANCE & HOUSEKEEPING**	**DATE ISSUED:**	**02/12/2011**
SUB ACTIVITY:	**N/A**	**INCIDENT No:**	**00317**