Leaking Propane Cylinder Causes Fatal Fire



Several unsecured propane cylinders were being stored on the third floor of a construction project. A large propane heater was in use nearby to dry out the work-in-progress. A loud noise alerted the workers that one of the stored propane cylinders had fallen over. One of the men walked toward the overturned cylinder, which was releasing propane. He then walked away, passing near the operating heater.

His clothing, which was saturated by propane, caught fire. The flames spread rapidly to the remaining cylinders, delaying his immediate rescue. He died of complications from his extensive burns.

This is another example where stopping to think of the consequences might have prevented a loss of life.

Training in the hazards and safety procedures involved in handling propane is extremely important. Written emergency procedures and weekly safety meetings might have prevented the situation. Safe and secure storage for flammable and explosive gases such as propane would have prevented the incident from happening.