No Escape From Burning Basement



A building contractor died when he was trapped in the burning basement of a house under construction.

Another worker was using an oxyacetylene cutting torch to cut I-beams over the basement of the house. Stray sparks set fire to some sawdust and scrap wood used as packing material. The worker escaped and sounded the alarm. In an attempt to put out the fire the contractor jumped into the basement, asking a worker for a bucket of water.

The basement became fully engulfed in flames and the contractor was killed. There was no means of escape from the basement – not even a ladder. There was no fire-fighting equipment on the site.

Always leave yourself an exit for such emergencies. The reason there was no ladder in the basement was to discourage prowlers at the house under construction, but this security measure proved fatal. Extinguishers or a water hose should be handy any time oxyacetylene is used around combustibles. Good housekeeping practices are essential and prevent the accumulation of combustible wastes.