Welder Electrocuted By Damaged Plug

About two weeks before this fatality, an electrical plug on a power cable of a welding machine was found to be damaged. The broken piece was the protective aluminum cover which housed the plug attached to a 440 volt 60 amp line.

The damaged plug cover was reported to the plant electrician. He did not have another aluminum cover in stock, so he taped rubber around the plug to form a shield. Assuming no one would try to use the damaged plug, he left it in the work area.

On the day of the incident, another worker had unwrapped the tape around the rubber shield and connected the plug so that he could use the welding machine. He then left the area.

The victim then prepared to use the same welding machine. When he touched the plug, he received a fatal shock.

After the victim was freed from the electrical circuit, the plant first aid person performed CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) until the fire department and ambulance personnel took over. The welder was pronounced dead right after he was admitted to the hospital.

This incident illustrates that the reporting of a hazard is not enough. The hazard also must be removed. Any defective equipment such as this electrical connector must be tagged and taken away from the work area immediately to be repaired or replaced. Hazards such as this must be isolated, and also require a posted warning and a talk with the other people in the area. Never assume that another person will know about the hazard.