

## SEELER Exothermic Torch

2007-06

November 2007

### PURPOSE

This Advisory is being issued to inform Department of Energy (DOE) Sites about the hazards associated with the SEELER Exothermic Torch and to recommend suspension of the use of such equipment.

### BACKGROUND

On November 15, 2005, a student attending a course at the National Training Center (NTC) was injured while using the SEELER Exothermic Torch. An investigation conducted by NTC and SEELER Enterprises found the dead-man switch leaking, which allowed oxygen to flow into the cable prior to the user's activation of the system. It appeared that the plunger inside the valve may not have fully sealed when closing the switch.

Corrective actions were instituted, and training resumed in early 2006. However, NTC has experienced two additional failures in 2007 where the switch from SEELER torches was found again leaking. A similar failure with the switch was also reported by a student taking a familiarization course on the SEELER torch at Oak Ridge (Y-12).

NTC found that the dead-man switch supplied by SEELER is rated to operate at 300 pounds per square inch (psi) while the SEELER regulator supplying the oxygen to the switch is factory-set to 310 psi. NTC has been unable to determine if this factor is a direct contributor to the switch failure.

To date, the problem with the leaking switch has not been resolved by SEELER Enterprises.

### IMPLICATIONS

Problems with the dead-man switch could imperil workers.



FIGURE 1 SEELER TORCH VALVE

### ACTIONS

Sites are urged to suspend the use of SEELER Exothermic Cutting Torch. Charlie Lopez (NTC) at (505) 845-5170, x-636, or e-mail [clopez@ntc.doe.gov](mailto:clopez@ntc.doe.gov) may be contacted if you have specific questions regarding the torch defect. Contact Dr. Bill McArthur (HS11) at (301) 903-9674 or e-mail [bill.mcarthur@hq.doe.gov](mailto:bill.mcarthur@hq.doe.gov) for issues regarding this advisory

(Signed by)

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