

SHELTER INSTALLATION SAFETY

Blast and radiation shelter installation, like any type of construction, has certain associated risks of accident. If enough shelters are installed to protect a significant fraction of the American people, some accidents will surely occur.

This is, of course, not a reason to avoid installation of shelters. Injuries during construction of above-ground buildings are common and sometimes fatal. We do not, however, put consumer warnings about falls on all design drawings or avoid construction of buildings in order to prevent injuries.

Several simple precautions concerning blast shelter construction are worth mentioning.

First, if the shelter is being fabricated from a surplus tank which has previously been used to store gasoline, fuel oil, or some other flammable liquid, then precautions must be taken in cutting or welding the tank until it has been cleaned.

For example, some fuel tanks do not have man holes. In order to clean and sand blast the tank, a hole must be cut in its surface. This hole is usually made where one of the shelter entryways will eventually be located.

There are several procedures for purging the tank to remove air, so that oxygen will not be present when this hole is cut. Sometimes the tanks are purged with carbon dioxide or are steamed or filled with water. These procedures should not be undertaken by an inexperienced person.