



# Customer Focus

## on Loss Control

*Innovative Safety and Health Solutions<sup>SM</sup>*

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## Working Safely With Empty Drums

Cutting the top off an empty drum, or welding on any drum, is dangerous business. It is often unclear what has been in the empty drum.

Performing cutting or welding incorrectly, or handling a drum unsafely, could have explosive results. Workers have suffered serious injuries when empty drums have exploded during attempts to cut them open.

### Handling Empty Drums Safely

- Correctly label all drums on site.
- Never weld or grind near drums; sparks can fly!
- Never use a drum as a welding platform.
- Make sure drums are properly recycled.
- Never apply heat to drums that may have contained flammable liquids.
- Store empty drums in a well-ventilated place away from the work area.
- Have MSDS sheets available for all drums on site.
- Never use air pressure to remove dents from a drum.

Use a “Think List” to try to determine what the drum was used for:

- Was it a flammable liquid or gas?
- Was it a chemical?
- Is there a hazard diamond on the label?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, *do not apply heat to the drum.*

Keep the drum away from oxy-acetylene torches, naked flame or sparks from welding and grinding equipment, or any other source of ignition.

### Go To a Specialist

If necessary, engage a company that specialize in cleaning and cutting drums. They thoroughly clean the drums and then test the inside of the drum with special instruments to ensure that the drum does not contain residue or explosive vapors. This is one job best left to the experts.

