

# Lessons Learned



— MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS —

Date: 3/26/2021

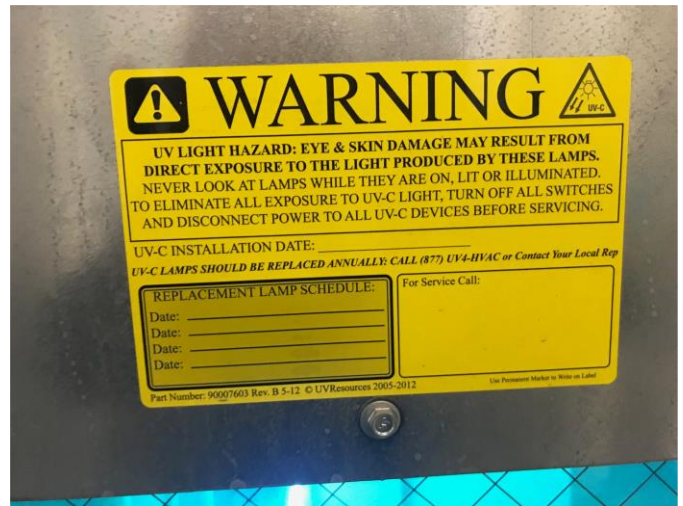
Region: Kennewick

Project: Pipe Shop

Incident Title: Ultra Violet (UV) light burn

## Summary

The injured employee was completing a small punch list item in an air handler unit located at Good Shepherd Hospital. When he opened the door to enter, the UV lights inside the unit went out. As he was working, a draft caused the door to close, and the lights came back on. He was in the unit less than 5 minutes. His eyes started to itch about 10 minutes after he exited the unit and within 2 hours, he could not open his eyes. He reported it to his supervisor and was seen at a local eye clinic. The UV light exposure caused severe corneal burns in both eyes.



## What Went Right?

- The safety switch to operate the UV light on the door operated correctly.
- There was warning signs outside the door.
- Employee reported it immediately.
- No permanent eye damage.

## What Went Wrong?

- UV exposure was not identified in the pre-job planning process or pre-task plan.
- Failed to follow posted warning signs.
- Was wearing regular safety glasses, not ones rated for that type of UV exposure.

## Lessons Learned

- Exposure to Ultraviolet (UV) Lights used to clean the air are similar to the UV exposure that is emitted from welding. They do not have to be bright or overbearing to be hazardous to bare skin and eyes. A short exposure can result in severe eye pain and injury to the cornea.
- Never enter a unit equipped with an ultraviolet air treatment system before disconnecting power to the ultraviolet lighting circuit.
- Pay attention to signage and comply with it's directions.
- Have a questioning attitude. If it's the first time question it.