

## Plasma barriers to entry

Despite the many advantages of modern plasma cutting technology, moving from oxyfuel to plasma cutting may meet resistance from workers who have used oxyfuel their entire career.

A senior ship fitter who has done the same work, the same way, for decades may be apprehensive about the adoption of plasma, even if the technology will ultimately help them do their job better. What follows is a list of common objections shipyard managers should be prepared to address before introducing plasma to their yard.



### Resistance to change

**“Our facility is already comfortable working with oxyfuel.”**

Every workforce has leaders. Sometimes those leaders are managers, responsible for leading a team of workers. Other times, those leaders are people who garner respect from others on the crew by virtue of their experience or ability to connect with others. Identify those leaders and engage them early on so they feel invested in the decision to switch to plasma and can help you communicate benefits to co-workers.



### Lack of training and familiarity with plasma

**“A new cutting technology will be too hard/costly to learn.”**

Though plasma systems are designed to withstand even rugged, harsh environments, workers are sometimes concerned about breaking or losing a new piece of equipment. More experienced workers are also likely to be hesitant to retire a process that is second nature in favor of something new, even if that process has a short learning curve like plasma. Schedule plentiful demonstrations to help workers become comfortable with plasma.



### Safety concerns

**“I’m worried about using plasma.”**

The absence of flammable gases makes plasma a much safer option than oxyfuel. Still some workers may worry the process is less safe. Recognizing and addressing those concerns, whether it relates to concerns about being too close to the heat source, metal dust, fumes, or something else, will help to alleviate anxiety among your workforce and smooth the adoption of plasma.



### Lack of convenience

**“Why use plasma if oxy is readily available?”**

Workers will use the tools available to them. If an oxyfuel torch is already nearby, it’s unlikely they’ll spend the time and energy to search for a plasma cutter. Consider bundling plasma with welding units on caged cubes for easy access in the facility. Ensure systems with a longer 15.2 m (50 ft.) lead length are made available if needed.



### Cost, availability, and reliability of compressed air

**“Plasma costs too much to operate.”**

One benefit of plasma is that, unlike oxyfuel, flammable gas is not needed. Still, workers may be concerned about the cost of compressed air, or in some regions, the ability of maintain a reliable and steady amount of pressure throughout the facility. Share cost comparisons so workers can better understand the cost savings that result from using plasma. Work to understand and address the reliability of your compressed air supply.

Though decisions in the shipyard can be slow and take buy-in from many teams, the result of successfully adopting plasma technology in your yard will lead you further down the path of operational excellence by helping you improve everything from worker safety to build quality, delivery schedules, and ultimately, cost.