Required Training

UC Lab Safety Fundamentals

Required PPE

Lab coat, safety glasses/goggles, nitrile gloves

Equipment

Candle

Matches

Tongs

Chemicals

2 Magnesium ribbons (6 in)

Procedure:

1. Cut little slits along the edges of one of the Mg strip to increase the surface area. Leave the other uncut.
2. Light the candle and, using tongs, hole the uncut Mg strip over the flame. Note that nothing happens.
3. Now hold the cut Mg strip over the flame. This strip will light and glow with a very bright flame.

Discussion:

Adding the slits along the side of the Mg strip increases the surface area making it more reactive than the uncut strip. Burning Mg can reach temperatures around 3,000? C and can even burn in an atmosphere of CO₂ making it hard to extinguish.

Hazards:

Burning magnesium reaches very high temperatures, so care must be used while performing the demo. The flame is also very bright, so instruct students not to look directly at the strip as this could cause eye damage.

SOP

N/A

Disposal (by Storeroom)

The resulting ashes (magnesium oxide) can be tossed in the trash.