Fitter Struck by Grinding Wheel

WHAT HAPPENED

A Fitter was making improvements to the guarding at the tail end of a conveyor in a rail pit. He wanted to extend the top guard by approximately 6". To do this he decided to cut this amount off another redundant guard and weld it to the top guard in situ. The guard that was to be cut was put into position with the help of the Site Manager.

The Fitter then proceeded to cut into the guard with a hand held grinder, complete with a “thin” cutting disc, while the Manager held onto the guard at the opposite side. At approximately 1/3rd through the cut, the disc jammed, which caused the tool to shoot out of the Fitter's hands, hitting his left leg before falling to the floor; since it was not fitted with a hold to run switch, the grinder was still running.

This caused a cut to the Fitter’s leg which required hospital attention and six stitches. The Fitter had completed a pre-job Worksafe Assessment prior to the task.



Guarding Being Cut



Angle Grinder

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

The injuries resulting from this incident were serious enough, but could have been far worse. The investigation identified the following learning points:

• A pre job risk assessment had been completed however the investigation found it not to be adequate for the task. Do assessments consider how risks can be eliminated / reduced through safer methods of work? In this instance the task could have been completed in a workshop using gas cutting. Are Worksafe, Point of Work Risk Assessments, completed for all none standard tasks?

• The grinder did not have handle attached and it kept running when the Fitter lost his grip due to the power switch remaining engaged. The defect reporting system for powered hand tools was not being used at the site. Do you use the right, well

maintained, tools / equipment for the job and never make do? Do you have adequate defect reporting and inspection systems for tools and machinery? Do powered hand tools have hold to run controls that cut the power when released?

• The guard was not clamped securely and moved when the grinder was applied. Are there suitable maintenance facilities on site for the range of activities being undertaken? Are work pieces suitably supported / secure, being clamped or held in a vice where possible?

• Though having received training, the Fitter was using the wrong disc for the activity being undertaken. Are personnel trained, competent and authorised for the full range of tasks they are required to carry out? Do they apply this training in the use and selection of the work methods and equipment they use?

• The Site Manager was positioned in a potential danger zone. Do we enforce exclusion zones where there is a risk of being struck by moving / flying / falling objects?



Fitters Overalls

LOCATION:	**COMPANY-WIDE**	**ALERT STATUS:**	**Normal**
ACTIVITY:	**MAINTENANCE & HOUSEKEEPING**	**DATE ISSUED:**	**08/01/2015 18:31:11**
SUB ACTIVITY:	**N/A**	**INCIDENT No:**	**00397**