

UK Safety Alert

Inexperience and Failure to Follow Instruction Leads to Injury

Details of the Incident

When a contractor's tipper trailer became stuck in the raised position while delivering to a quarry site, the contractor called their repair agent. The repair agent then contracted the work out to another company, who arranged for their Fitter to attend site. After inductions and a Permit to Work were completed by the Site Manager, the Fitter inspected the trailer, before calling his company to inform them of the problem. The Fitter was told to "stand down" by his company in order for the trailer manufacturer to attend site to review the defect. In the meantime, the trailer manufacturer phoned the truck Driver and also spoke to the Fitter. The Fitter then took it upon himself to try and remove a valve to drain the hydraulic fluid, which was stopping the trailer ram from descending. Because the body wasn't propped, as the Fitter released the valve, the pressure caused it to eject with force and strike his arm, causing significant soft tissue damage. This resulted in the Fitter not being able to return to work for nearly three weeks.



Housing where the valve was connected



Injury caused by the valve (right) striking it

Learning Points

- **A Permit to Work was issued, which stated that a body prop must be used to support the raised tipper body, but the Fitter failed to do this.** When issuing a Permit to Work, is the task discussed in detail to capture all hazardous activities / control measures and ensure everyone understands the requirements? Are periodic checks made of activities covered by Permits to Work to ensure all required precautions are followed? Are contractors adequately supervised during their time on site?
- **The Fitter was told to "stand down" and wait for the trailer manufacturer to attend site, but he ignored the instruction and attempted to rectify the fault himself.** Are competencies of contractors verified before any work is carried out? Are activities adequately supervised to ensure that instructions are followed?
- **The contract haulier subcontracted a vehicle repair business to rectify the problem who, in turn, subcontracted the work to another company.** Are adequate controls in place to restrict the subcontracting of work to third parties? Where this practice occurs, are checks in place to ensure companies are reputable and their personnel competent for the activities they are required to undertake?

REMEMBER NEVER WORK UNDER AN UNPROPPED TIPPER BODY

If in doubt regarding vehicle repairs, obtain competent advice.