

LTI: Finger injury during work with rotating machinery

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An electrician tried to modify a cable shoe using a pillar drill in the engine room workshop.

What happened?

During initial use of the drilling machine, the electrician secured the cable shoe with a vice and did not wear any gloves. However, during subsequent drilling to finalise/enlarge the hole, he did not secure the cable shoe properly, and he held it with his left hand whilst wearing cotton gloves, as the cable shoe had become too hot to touch.

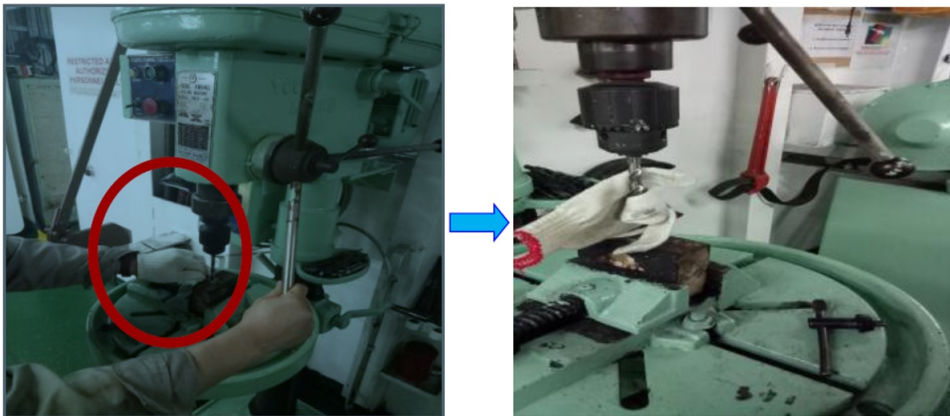
His glove got entangled with the drill bit, resulting in a serious injury to his left index finger. Following first aid, he was medevaced by helicopter and transferred to hospital for further treatment. Medical examination revealed a partial amputation of his left index finger and open fracture dislocation of his thumb and damaged tendons, requiring surgery.

The injured person was not tired and was working appropriate hours at the time of the incident.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls



What went wrong? What were the causes?

- There was no evidence of any risk assessment, and a toolbox talk (TBT) was not conducted.
- The electrician was wearing gloves while using the drilling machine, though there was a warning sign prohibiting wearing of gloves while operating the drill posted nearby.
- Immediate causes:

- Improper use of personal protective equipment (PPE): glove got entangled with the drill bit.
- Carelessness: warning signage was ignored, and the cable shoe was not secured properly before drilling started.
- Causal factors:
 - Inadequate planning and lack of risk assessment.
 - The electrician did not inform others of his intent to use the drill, and he was rushing to finish the work.

What lessons were learned?

- Gloves and loose clothing should not be worn when working with rotating machinery.
- “More haste – less speed” – avoid shortcuts and rushing to finish the job.
- Members can refer to IMCA’s short video [Watch your hands](#) from the *Be prepared to work safely* safety promotion materials.

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