

Injury to Fingers During Grinding Activity

Safety Flash Published on 2 February 2021 Generated on 28 January 2026 IMCA SF 04/21

An operator cut both hands when mishandling a grinder after using it to conduct maintenance work. He received several stitches in two fingers but was able to return to work on restricted duties.

What happened?

Someone was performing maintenance activities with a grinder, using the grinder to cut and shape wood.

When he finished, he switched off the grinder and placed on deck.

He removed his gloves and then proceeded to pick up the grinder so that it could be unplugged from the wall.

When picking up the device, the injured person inadvertently pushed the on-switch and the blade cut two fingers of his right hand.

When he then attempted to switch off the grinder he also cut a finger on his left hand.

He managed to disconnect the tool from the socket.

He received several stitches in two fingers but was able to return to work on restricted duties.

What were the causes?

Our Member identified the following preliminary causes:

- Poor selection of the proper tool for the job, and the grinder was not compliant with the company's own standards for such equipment.
- Not following manufacturer's instructions – there was a toothed saw blade fitted which was not recommended for use with this grinder.
- The injured person picked up the grinder in an unsafe way whilst it was still powered.
- The injured person was not wearing the required PPE – safety gloves.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Line of fire



Bypassing safety controls

Our Member took the following actions

- Removed all button-controlled grinders and replaced with paddle switch grinders with handles as per the company's existing standards
- Reissued good practice guidelines in the use of grinders
- Began programme of refresher training on the use of rotating hand tools
- Reviewed and update maintenance risk assessment for rotating machinery.

Members may wish to refer to IMCA's *Are YOU prepared to work safely?* videos:

- IMCA short video – [Watch your hands](#)
- IMCA short video – [Grinding wheel safety](#)

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