

Hand grinder injuries

Safety Flash Published on 2 May 2005 Generated on 20 January 2025 IMCA SF 06/05

A Member has reported two recent injuries caused by the use of portable hand grinders.

What happened?

The **first injury** was due to the grinder wheel binding onto the weld being worked upon, causing the grinder to 'kick' and deflect into his arm. The grinder's side grip or stabilisation handle had been removed, making it harder to control the device.

The **second injury** happened when the operator lost control of the grinder as a result of his taking one hand off it whilst it was still turning at high speed. He had taken one hand off the grinder because he was attempting to prevent the pipe on which he was working from falling when it came out of a support stand. The grinding wheel was still turning at high speed and the gyroscopic precessing force acting on the tool was too great for the operator to handle with one hand. This led to the grinder being deflected into his other arm causing an injury.

Lessons learnt

Our Member has recommended the following steps:

- Remind all persons operating grinders that they should be used very carefully, referring to and following all appropriate rules of operation.
- Take time for risk assessment before commencing the job.
- Ensure that all risks and issues are discussed in toolbox talks.
- Ensure that the work piece is very secure and cannot move.

The company also noted that there had been some re-use of grinding discs that had been used subsea. This practice is dangerous, as grinding discs which have been exposed to moisture are likely to de-laminate, causing them to disintegrate at high speed. Thus discs which have been exposed to moisture over a length of time or which have been used subsea should always be discarded.

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