

Crewman suffered first aid injury during cutting operations

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A Member has reported an incident in which a crewman cut his thigh whilst using a hand grinder.

What happened?

The incident occurred when he was cutting a 900 mm diameter pipe's bevel side to make a proper gap between the pipes. While beginning to work on the pipe, the cutting disc did not enter the cutting point (of the gap) correctly. This made the grinder slip and move away from its position and hit the injured person's right inner thigh. The job was stopped immediately and the injured person was sent to the clinic for medical treatment (cleaning and dressing the wound). As per the medical treatment administered by the medic, the incident was classified as a First Aid Case.

Our member's investigation revealed the following:

- The injured person was performing cutting activity standing on a portable scaffold platform that was not adjusted properly for the work.
- The scaffold was not suitable for the working height and the distance for the pipe that needed to be cut.
- This inadequate scaffold adjustment forced the injured person to stand in an unstable body position where his left leg was bent a little bit forward and the knee totally leaning onto the pipe.
- The injured person had 18 months experience in this function.
- He was wearing the correct PPE.
- The grinder had been inspected before the job and all proper safeguards were found to be correctly fitted and in place.
- The incident was witnessed by the foreman at the scene.

Our member concluded that the immediate and root causes were as follows:

- Immediate cause: improper position for task – the injured person was standing in an unstable position where he was bent forward with his left knee leaning fully on the pipe.
- Immediate cause: poor judgement -the injured person or his supervisor should have stopped the job and made sure the portable scaffold was adjusted properly for the work.
- Root cause: inadequate design criteria -the scaffold was not suitable for the working height and the distance for the pipe that needed to be cut.

Our member took the following corrective actions:

- Further safety discussion and toolbox talks.
- Proper training with the focus topic being that proper position of equipment and personnel is critical to a safe work site.
- Ensure proper working platform to be provided for working at height.

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