

'Routine' task, non-routine result: Finger injury during welding

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A member has reported an incident in which a welder injured his finger whilst at work.

What happened?

The welder was finishing cutting and noticed there was some loose slag built up from previous work. He swept this slag away with his hand and felt he had cut his left index finger. He inspected the welder's hot work gloves he was wearing and noticed there was a hole in the left index finger of the glove. He was unsure if the hole was caused by sweeping away the slag or if it was already present.

This was a 'routine' or everyday activity, where complacency had perhaps set in.



Findings

Our member notes:

- It is important to retain a focus on the 'routine' as well as on significant, major or potentially catastrophic 'high risk' events.
- Crew should remain alert to memory lapse or lack of awareness.

Lessons learned

In this case:

- The welder should have used a broom for removing the loose slag.
- Gloves are personal protective equipment (PPE) and worn for protection, they are not sweeping tools.
- PPE should be regularly checked for damage – perhaps most especially, helmets, safety glasses and gloves. Change out and dispose of damaged PPE.
- The incident was discussed at welder's pre-start meetings and use of brooms was reiterated. The risk assessment for welding was reassessed regarding proper use of tools, equipment and materials.

Actions

Members may wish to refer to the following similar incidents (key words: gloves, cut):

- Hand injuries
- Routine task: Badly cut finger changing mop head

Members should be aware that IMCA has a pocket safety card on this topic – *Watch your hands*.

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