

Pedestal Drill Chuck Assembly Detached Causing Head Injury

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What happened?

A crewman was drilling a hole through a wooden plank using a benchtop heavy drill machine in the vessel's engine room. The drill chuck assembly detached and hit the right side of his forehead resulting in a laceration above his right eyebrow.

What went wrong?

Our member's investigation noted that:

- The bench top drill was not fit to use, as the spindle sleeve was not available.
- There had been an unauthorised modification of the drill chuck assembly (spindle sleeve) – a hexagon headed bolt was modified for use as a spindle sleeve.
- The injured person and the supervisor were not fully aware of the scope of the assigned activities or job requirements.
- The job should have been stopped but the risk was deemed tolerable. Safety controls were bypassed.
- No personal protective equipment (PPE) was worn.
- The injured person was not familiar with the bench top drill assembly, operation or safety precautions and it was his first time operating the machine.

What were the causes?

- The immediate cause of the injury was the ejection of the chuck assembly along with the modified spindle sleeve from the spindle hole.
- The root causes were lack of appropriate supervision and lack of a safe system of work – the injured person should never have been allowed near the machine.
- Causal factors included:
 - risk was seen as tolerable by both the supervisor and the injured person.
 - the bench top drill had not been quarantined to prevent unauthorised use.
 - there had been no appropriate toolbox talk or risk assessment beforehand.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls

What lessons were learned? What actions were taken?

- Handmade or modified tools should not be used.
- Tools and equipment to be inspected for their fitness, and unfit equipment

to be isolated – all equipment was subject to further inspection and unfit equipment was removed from the vessel.

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