

Don't ASSUME – verify and check

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A Member reports a number of serious control of work related accidents and near misses, in which a common cause across them all was seen to be **ASSUMPTIONS** being made without **VERIFICATION** checks being performed. Three examples were an electric shock, a dropped scaffold plank, and a person in a pipe assembly area whilst equipment was moving.

What happened?

Electric shock: it was wrongly ASSUMED that a slip ring was isolated; it was not VERIFIED. Entry to the slip ring area was not required for the activity, that is why it was not isolated. This resulted in a person being electrocuted.

Dropped scaffold plank: it was wrongly ASSUMED that dropped object protection was removed. This resulted in a scaffold plank dropping 4m onto the coating station floor when the roller box, which the plank was resting on, was opened.

Worker went into area where equipment was moving: it was wrongly ASSUMED that the pipe assembly area was isolated; it was not VERIFIED. This resulted in a work party being exposed to moving machinery where they were working.

Photos

What went wrong?

- In all three examples, important steps in the Control of work process were omitted, for example, activities were started without complete Permit to Work or Lock out/Tag out documentation.
- Opportunities to “speak up” and potentially stop the job were missed during toolbox talks.

Recommendations

- Follow your company control of work processes – they are there to keep you safe.
- Do not start an activity until the control of work process, including all the necessary paperwork such as permits, JSAs, toolbox talks, etc, is complete. The paperwork is there to keep you safe.
- Inspect and VERIFY that all safeguards and precautions, as stipulated in the permits and JSAs, are in place before starting the activity – do not

ASSUME they are in place.

- Don't be afraid to SPEAK UP and STOP THE JOB if you think that the control of work process is not being followed – DARE to CARE.

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