

BBC news: Worker loses hand after he was injured with faulty hydraulic cutting gear

Safety Flash Published on 17 September 2019 Generated on 28 January 2026 IMCA SF 22/19

A firefighter whose hand was amputated after he was injured by faulty cutting gear has received £1.5 m in damages.

What happened?

The firefighter was working with hydraulic cutting equipment on a training exercise when his hand was pierced by a high-pressure jet of hydraulic fluid. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-48599963>.

It was only later that day he noticed his hand starting to swell and he began to feel a burning sensation. There was a small puncture wound through the side of his hand. He noted that one of his colleagues looked at the glove he had been wearing at the time and there was a hole straight through it.

He subsequently had 40 operations after the hydraulic fluid destroyed the tissue in his right hand, but after a four-year battle doctors were forced to amputate.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Energy isolation



What went wrong?

The hose pipe connecting the hydraulic pump (which worked at up to 850 bar of pressure) to the cutting gear was riddled with tiny punctures which can appear over time after the hose has been dragged over broken glass or metal shards at the scene of an incident.

One of these punctures caused a fine jet of hydraulic fluid to escape and pierce the leather safety gloves worn by the injured person.

What actions were taken?

This incident has been circulated as part of a safety flash as nearly all IMCA Members use hydraulic equipment, and incidents of this sort have been seen amongst our Members.

IMCA Safety Flashes summarise key safety matters and incidents, allowing lessons to be more easily learnt for the benefit of the entire offshore industry.

The effectiveness of the IMCA Safety Flash system depends on the industry sharing information and so avoiding repeat incidents. Incidents are classified according to IOGP's Life Saving Rules.

All information is anonymised or sanitised, as appropriate, and warnings for graphic content included where possible.

IMCA makes every effort to ensure both the accuracy and reliability of the information shared, but is not be liable for any guidance and/or recommendation and/or statement herein contained.

The information contained in this document does not fulfil or replace any individual's or Member's legal, regulatory or other duties or obligations in respect of their operations. Individuals and Members remain solely responsible for the safe, lawful and proper conduct of their operations.

Share your safety incidents with [IMCA online](#). Sign-up to receive Safety Flashes [straight to your email](#).