

BSEE: recurring hand injuries from alternative cutting devices

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The United States Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) has published [Safety Alert 487](#) relating to an observed trend of recurring hand injuries while using alternative cutting devices.

What happened?

Incident 1: While running a new cable in a cable tray, an offshore worker was using a cutter to remove previously installed zip ties. Although the protective tip of the cutter was damaged, exposing the blade, the offshore worker continued to use the damaged cutting device. The exposed blade cut through the worker's glove, causing a laceration on the left hand between the thumb and index finger.



Incident 2: An offshore worker sustained a laceration to the back of their hand, between the thumb and index finger, while cutting zip ties. The incident occurred when the cutting device rebounded, causing the injury. It was found that the protective guard over the blade was missing, leaving the blade exposed (Figure 2).



Incident 2: Exposed blade on alternative cutting device

Actions to take

BSEE notes that when using any alternative cutting device, it is critical to follow safe work practices to prevent worker injury or damage to property. Misuse of these alternative cutting devices often leads to injury, emphasizing the need for future continuous vigilance and strict adherence to safety protocols. Alternative cutting devices that have been damaged or altered should be discarded.

BSEE recommends:

- Ensuring all personnel identify the appropriate alternative cutting device in the Job Safety Analysis for the assigned task.
- Inspecting the alternative cutting device before use to confirm that the protective shielding is free from wear or chips and that it is properly installed.
- Ensuring personnel do not alter or modify alternative cutting devices before use;
- Ensuring personnel use cut resistant gloves for added protection when using alternative cutting devices.
- Ensuring that if the alternative cutting device is defective in any way, the cutting device is discarded appropriately.

A wide range of safety promotional material on hand safety is available from IMCA here:

[IMCA safety promotional material](#)



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