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INCIDENT ALERT

A carpenter was tasked with installing angle braces on a concrete form. The braces consisted of a metal adjustable bracket manufactured with an angle attachment bracket on one end. A section of 2 by 4 was attached to the opposite end to allow attachment to a lower section of formwork. He had driven nails partially into the wooden section and was steadying the bracket with his left hand as he swung the hammer with his right. His hammer glanced off an adjacent handrail upright and struck his left hand. He was taken to a nearby medical facility where he was diagnosed with lacerations and a broken finger. He was treated and returned to light duty work.

LESSONS LEARNED

There are several factors that have been identified as contributing to this incident. First, the area he was working in was quite restricted due to the handrail supports. He had a large framing hammer (32 ounce) in his possession and chose to use it for the task. A smaller hammer, a powered nail gun, or a powered screw gun may have resulted in better control of the tool and could have been better choices. Secondly, he was holding the support bracket with his left hand positioned fairly close to where he was driving the nails. Clamping the material or moving his hand well away from the impact point could have prevented the hammer from striking his hand. Third, the carpenter and his foreman had not surveyed the area and developed an adequate task plan that identified the hazards, the necessary tools to perform the work, and the appropriate work technique. Implementing a standard practice of developing a task specific work plan can help eliminate injuries.

The carpenter was wearing gloves at the time of the incident. Mandatory glove use is a contractor’s site wide policy and most likely helped to minimize the injury.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about their expectations for hand tool use. Ask about their expectations for glove use. Ask how they implement planning that takes into account the unique circumstances that exist with each task.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are people using tools in cramped areas? Are they holding material they are working on with their hands or clamping material in place? Are they thinking about the possibility of injuring their off hand? Could the loss of tool control result in an injury, either to the worker or others nearby? Have they developed a plan for the task they are performing?

3. Share this Incident Alert with your contractor and ask them to share it with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff

REV. (DATE)