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INCIDENT ALERT

A carpenter was in the process of installing metal studs in a location near an exterior block wall. He was using a screw gun to secure a stud to the top frame. The space between the exterior block wall and the new stud wall was very tight and the carpenter chose to hold the metal stud in position with his right hand as he was operating the screw gun with the left. As he was installing a screw he felt the point of it poke the ring finger on his right hand. He jerked his hand back away from the screw and cut it on the top frame of the stud wall. His foreman transported him to a nearby medical facility where he received several stitches. The doctor also directed him not to return to work for 7 days.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the investigation several issues were identified. First, had the worker been wearing hand protection he would most likely not have suffered the laceration. Second, the worker could have used a clamp or block to hold the stud in position, allowing his hand to be away from the direct line of the screw and preventing the initial injury (his ring finger). Third, the worker had missed the previous days work and was feeling pressure to “hurry up” and get more work done.

His foreman had been performing the task on the previous work day and had developed a method of holding the material with a clamp, but he had not shared the technique with the worker. Had the worker been engaged with his foreman in the development of a task plan to identify the hazards involved in the operation, he would have had the opportunity to explore alternate methods of securing the work, gathered the right tools to perform the work, and understood to take the time necessary to perform the work safely.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about their expectations for hand tool use. Ask about their expectations for glove use, hand positioning, and securing material while performing work. Ask how foremen are engaged in the work planning process and how best work practices are shared, and how these issues are addressed in their Site Specific Safety Plan.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are people using clamps or other devices to hold material in position? Could the loss of tool control result in an injury, either to the worker or others nearby? Are they wearing gloves when working with sharp around sharp objects? Have task plans been developed for the work?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff