INCIDENT ALERT

Two workers were in the process of installing a radio frequency shielded door component. The system, weighing more than 300 lbs, was constructed of sheet steel, copper, aluminum, and wood, with a sheet steel edge protruding on one side. The door system was lying on one side and needed to be repositioned upright for installation. The two workers discussed the move and decided that one would steady the door as the other lifted it up on end. As the two workers were moving the door it slipped and pivoted. A sharp corner of the component cut the right wrist of one of the workers just above the cuff of his glove. He transported himself to a nearby medical facility where he received 5 stitches and was released to return to work.

LESSONS LEARNED

Though the two workers had recognized the component was heavy and awkward, they did not take into account the potential for being injured by the edges of the system. Had the workers taken the time to formally ask the question “What about this task could hurt me?”, they probably would have recognized the cut potential. They could have then taken the time to guard the edges using materials close at hand (cardboard, packing tape, etc.). Additionally, the injured worker indicated he had never been shown a hazard analysis for the task he was performing. Their employer was also the manufacturer of the component system but apparently had not performed a hazard analysis for the installation. Washington Department of Labor and Industries standards require that employers perform a hazard analysis with a focus on personal protective equipment needs prior to assigning work to employees. Performing this type of hazard analysis could also result in the manufacturer identifying the cut hazard and engineering the injury potential out of the system.

Lastly, a different method of moving and positioning the door should be explored. Workers physically handling heavy materials without the aid of mechanical devices are exposed to the potential for soft tissue injuries. Soft tissue injuries can potentially be very serious, often resulting in lost workdays and permanent disability.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about their expectations for Job Hazard Analysis and task planning. Ask if they review the hazard analyses completed by their subcontractors and vendors. Talk with them about their policies and expectations about using material handling devices.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are people working around sharp objects? If so, how are they protecting themselves
from injury? Could the loss of material control result in an injury, either to the worker or others nearby? Have they developed a task plan for the activity?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff