INCIDENT ALERT

An electrician was tasked with repairing a broken conduit support. The support had been installed in an existing concrete foundation wall and one of the support bolts failed. The work location was in a trench adjacent to an existing building. The trench was approximately 3 feet wide and 3 feet deep, and other utilities had already been installed in the trench. Performing the repair required drilling new holes for anchor bolts. After inspecting the work area the electrician found the best way to access the repair point was to lay down on his back in the trench and operate the roto-hammer with his left hand while steadying it with his right. As he was drilling one hole, the bit bound and the roto-hammer clutch mechanism disengaged. The worker pulled the drill from the hole and re-started the motor. His right hand slipped forward and the drill bit caught his glove, twisting the small finger. The worker reported his injury and was taken to a clinic for diagnosis. He had suffered a detached ligament and surgery was recommended. The treatment was completed and the worker released to return to restricted duty.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the incident review several contributing factors were identified. First, the trench was cramped and access was difficult. That combined with the length of the tool needed to perform the work made control of the roto-hammer difficult. The gloves he was wearing had a rubber palm which was fairly sticky. Had he been wearing leather gloves they may not have caught in the drill bit. Additionally, the roto-hammer was designed with an auxiliary handle, but the handle was not attached. Having an auxiliary handle available may have helped with control of the equipment. Also, the worker could not recall having developed a task plan for the specific task and no plan was located.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about how they manage job hazard analysis and task planning for working with power tools. Ask about what considerations are given to hazards associated with using rotating power equipment (saws, drills, grinders, etc.). Ask how workers are included in the task planning and job hazard analysis process. Encourage your contractors to help train their employees in identifying common hazards associated with daily tasks.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are workers using rotating equipment? What kind of gloves are they wearing? What precautions have been taken to assure they will not be exposed to a potential injury?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff