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INCIDENT ALERT

An abatement worker was tasked with removing lead containing paint from a concrete wall. The worker was given a small grinder in order to perform the task. The grinder was equipped with an auxiliary handle, but had no guard. The worker grasped the auxiliary handle with his left hand and actuated the grinder switch with his right. As the worker was operating the grinder, the auxiliary handle loosened. He continued to work and the handle eventually came off, causing his left hand to slip forward to the wall. The disc on the grinder caught traction and ran across his left hand between the first and second finger, grinding through the glove and into his hand. The worker immediately contacted his supervisor who transported him to a nearby medical facility where he received 8 stitches and was released to return to restricted duty.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the incident review several contributing factors were identified. First, no task plan had been developed for the work. Second, the tool being used had not been inspected and the worker had not been trained in the use and inspection of the tool. Third, the grinder had no guard over the disk, which is required by WISHA standard 296-807-180. Fourth, the tool selected for the task was determined to be the wrong tool. A hand held scarifier would have accomplished the task without exposing the worker to rotating equipment.

Another factor that directly impacted the potential for injury was selection of proper gloves. Many manufacturers make gloves that are specifically designed for cut and abrasion resistance. It is important to keep in mind, however, that personal protective equipment is always the last line of defense and we should look to engineering controls (such as proper machine guarding) and management controls (such as selecting the right tool for the job, training the workers in proper tool use, training the workers in proper tool inspection, and developing job hazard analysis) as the primary methods of controlling hazards. Had any of these systemic controls been in place the injury could possibly have been prevented.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about how they manage job hazard analysis and task planning for common daily tasks. Ask how workers are included in the task planning and job hazard analysis process. Ask how they verify workers have been trained to operate and inspect equipment they must use to perform their tasks.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are workers performing their tasks around moving or rotating equipment? If so, what precautions have been taken to assure they will not be exposed to a potential injury? Have they developed a task plans that includes appropriate methods of protection?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff

REV. (DATE)