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Date Issued: April 9, 2007

INCIDENT ALERT

An ironworker was tasked with welding on structural steel. The steel was being used to support metal decking that would become part of the concrete floor of the building. The metal deck had already been installed, and the worker found it necessary to break loose a tack weld in order to complete his task. He decided to use a long, heavy pry bar to break the weld. He wedged the bar under the metal deck, grasped it with both hands, and was pushing down on the bar when the weld broke easier than expected. His left hand struck the metal deck, pinching and lacerating his left pinky finger. He reported the injury to his supervisor who transported him to a nearby medical facility. He received stitches and was released to return to work.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the investigation it was noted that the worker had wrapped his hands completely around the bar. A typical method of using hand leverage tools is to press in the direction you need with the flat of your palm. This keeps your knuckles and fingers from being pinched in the event the tool slips or unexpectedly moves.

Another point of discussion was around task sequencing. It is still under investigation if the work was a result of some item being missed prior to the installation of the metal deck or if the deck had been installed out of sequence and the initial work not completed. Of course, if no deck had been present there would have been no need to remove it and the injury would not have occurred.

Additionally, no task plan or job hazard analysis had been developed for the work. This more thoughtful approach may have resulted in the selection of a different type of tool for the job, thus eliminating the potential for the pinch point and preventing the injury.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Talk with your contractor about how job sequencing can directly impact the safety of their subcontractors and employees. Ask how they reinforce the need for task planning and hazard assessment with their subcontractors. Ask about their expectations for hand tool use and how they verify tools are being used in a safe manner.

2. Watch for activities that may result in similar exposures to injury during your walkthrough. Are workers placing their hands in potential pinch points? Are they wrapping their hands completely around leverage tools, potentially exposing them to the same type of injury described in this alert?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff

REV. (DATE)