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INCIDENT ALERT

Two carpenters were in the process of deconstructing a wooden work platform that had been installed in a new elevator shaft. The platform had been constructed using plywood covering 12 foot long 4” by 4” beams. The elevator shaft was surrounded by cable hand rail, and the carpenter working inside the rail was wearing fall arrest equipment. They had removed the plywood covering and the worker inside the handrail was in the process of handing the beams across the top rail. His partner was receiving the beams and stacking them in an area clear of the work zone. As the worker inside the handrail slid one beam across the top rail the other worker reached out to grab it and a sliver of wood penetrated his right palm. He removed the sliver from his hand and continued to work. The next day he noticed redness and pain in the area and reported the injury to his supervisor. He was then transported him to a nearby hand specialist who removed an additional piece of wood that was deeply embedded. He was then released to return to work.

LESSONS LEARNED

Several issues were identified during the incident investigation. First, the worker was wearing gloves, but they were designed for more dexterous work and were constructed of thin material. A more appropriate glove for the task would have been heavily constructed, such as a leather work glove, a thick rubber palmed glove, or the like. Second, though a Job Hazard Analysis had been developed no task plan had been developed by the workers. Had this activity taken place they may have identified the need for heavier gloves. Third, attentiveness, hand placement, and better communication between the work partners were discussed. Had they worked out a routine to set the beam on the hand rail and transfer possession without sliding it across the rail the injury may never have occurred.

Another point worth discussing is the need to inform supervision of any injury that occurs. Immediate medical attention may have prevented a night of pain and suffering for the worker.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Discuss task planning activities with your contractors. Ask how they reinforce the planning process as it takes place at the crew level. Talk with them about personal protective equipment and how glove selection is managed for each individual task.

2. Watch for activities that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are people sliding material into other workers hands? Are people handling rough wood or timber that may result in splinters? Are they using the proper gloves? Have they developed a task plan for their work that addresses these hazards?

3. Encourage your contractors to share and discuss this incident alert with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff