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INCIDENT ALERT

A drywall finisher was in the process of taping a recently completed wall in an existing building. He was working from tapers stilts. The area he was working in was between an existing HVAC diffuser and the wall. At one point he turned from the wall and the diffuser contacted his right ear below the rim of his hard hat. There was a sharp edge on the diffuser, which lacerated his ear. He safely got off of his stilts and went to his gang box area where he applied a bandage. He then drove himself approximately 30 miles to a clinic where he received 4 stitches and was released to return to work.

LESSONS LEARNED

Two issues were noted during the incident investigation. First, though the workers had developed a good task plan for the work they were performing, the sharp edge on the diffuser had been missed. This hazard was not readily anticipated or easily identified. Second, the worker chose to drive himself to the clinic for examination and treatment. The injury was not severe enough to warrant an ambulance, but it is never a good idea for an injured person to transport themselves, particularly for long distances. A better practice would be for a supervisor, co-worker, or safety representative to transport them. The potential exists that the injured person could pass out or be distressed or distracted enough that a collision could occur.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about how they manage how they manage their task planning program, particularly in relation to inspection of the area in which workers are performing their tasks.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are workers positioning themselves between objects suspended from the ceiling in order to perform their work? If so, has the area been inspected for sharps and protrusions that may result in injury? If these conditions exist, what steps have been taken to mitigate the hazard?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff