Safety Incident Alert #021108.1
Lacerated Arm

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Date Issued: February 26, 2008

INCIDENT ALERT

An apprentice laborer had been working on demolition at a construction site. He needed to move a scaffold that had been erected near him, and to position it properly he needed to close an awning type window. The window was above his head, and while trying to close it the worker pushed on one of the panes of glass. The glass broke and his left arm went through. He quickly pulled his arm back and was cut by one of the sharp pieces of glass in the pane. He stopped work immediately and was transported to a nearby medical facility where he received 14 stitches. He was released to return to restricted duty.

LESSONS LEARNED

The investigation in to the incident identified several issues. First, the awning windows are normally closed with the use of a long pole with a hook. These had all been removed from the building for the demolition. Also, none of the workers had been advised of the potential for the glass to break if the window was not closed properly. This was immediately corrected by making the window closing devices available and holding an instructive meeting about their use. Second, the demolition activities have been behind schedule, and the worker was attempting to move as rapidly as possible to continue his work. He did not stop to plan the activity or think of the possible hazards. There were ladders available and a scaffold immediately behind him that he could have used to climb to a position that would allow him to close the window properly. Third, though the workers had helped develop a task plan for the work the potential for injury due to broken glass was not taken into consideration. Better assessment of the hazards in the work area could have helped prevent this injury.

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 there sharp objects in the area? Are workers demonstrating risky behaviors? Do workers have the equipment they need to perform their jobs safely, and have they been trained in proper use of the equipment?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff