Safety Incident Alert #091508.1
Hand Injury

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Date Issued: September 17, 2008

INCIDENT ALERT

A carpenter was installing formwork in preparation for the placement of a concrete sidewalk. The forms were made up of 2” by 12” lumber. Some of the formwork had been installed, and in order to complete the form he needed to retrieve form stakes from a laydown area. He went to the laydown area and picked up several stakes, placing them on his shoulder to carry back to the work area. As he was stepping over a form board his pant leg caught on a large splinter in the board. He tripped and fell to the ground, releasing his hold on the stakes and extending his arms in an attempt to break his fall. The stakes he had been carrying dropped onto his gloved right hand, resulting in an avulsion to his right ring finger. He was transported to a nearby medical facility where he received 6 stitches, then was released to return to work.

LESSONS LEARNED

Investigation into the circumstances surrounding the injury identified several areas for improvement. First, the formwork being used had been damaged during use, resulting in the wood splintering. The damage should have been cut from the wood prior to re-use. Next, the worker needed to walk to an area away from his work zone to retrieve materials. If the materials had been staged in the work area he would not have needed to carry as many stakes. Third, materials should not be carried on a workers shoulder. Materials could be carried in a bucket or other container, which would ease stress on the workers body, lower his center of gravity, and could have helped him to maintain balance.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about how they manage job hazard analysis and task planning for common daily tasks. Ask how material handling and staging of materials are addressed. Ask about their policies on workers carrying materials.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are workers carrying materials on their shoulders? Are materials staged as closely as possible to the work taking place, reducing the need to leave the area for more supplies? Are any tripping hazards in the work area being addressed and eliminated?

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

Distribution:
All CPO Staff