

SAFETY ALERT

211 - Electrical Cable Cut

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

Workers were onsite removing a large redundant fibreglass oven and supporting infrastructure, fixed walkways and ladders from a Client's site.

During this process, a worker was asked to cut a section of steel using a grinder so it could be removed from the area.

As the worker was cutting, an electrical flash has occurred as the wheel of the grinder cut through an unknown live electrical cable on the reverse of the steel.

How are the people involved?

There were no persons injured in this near miss

What immediate actions were taken?

- ▶ Work was suspended at the site and the incident reported to management who attended and initiated an investigation.
- ▶ The Client had provided all isolations for the site and this was verbally verified just prior to the incident, though there was no physical checking of this on the day.
- ▶ Work had progressed over several weeks
- ▶ Changes to the work team were implemented and a more rigorous review and assessment of job steps applied as a result of this event
- ▶ An electrician has been included on the work team to allow all cables to be checked prior to removal.

What further actions are required?

- ▶ Update all workers on the requirement to 'Test Before You Touch' prior to cutting cable
- ▶ Job planning to include electricians to ensure verification of isolation occurs prior to work commencing.
- ▶ We cannot rely on others to isolate correctly. We must protect our workers checking all electrical cables, circuits and inspect cut areas before commencing work

WHAT SYSTEMS FAILED AND HOW DID THESE FAILURES CONTRIBUTE TO THE INCIDENT?



TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Unknowingly the wrong tool was being used for the job (cutting cable). N.B. this did not change the outcome.



POSITIONS OF PEOPLE

- ▶ Worker was in a EWP at the time of incident. They did not inspect reverse side of steel prior to cutting



RULES & PROCEDURES

- ▶ 'Test Before You Touch' should always be applied before any electrical work is done
- ▶ There was no physical verification of isolation during the work task. Verbal client verification is inadequate
- ▶ Industrial buildings often have several feeds. Project isolation did not account for alternate feeds
- ▶ Long term project and first reported active feed found. Some work team complacency is suspected

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LESSONS

- ▶ All electrical isolations are to be verified by testing known cables and circuits – *Test Before You Touch*
- ▶ Where a task involves the cutting of cable trays, roof trusses or similar, the immediate cut area is to be marked, infrastructure verified and then cut once proven safe.
- ▶ Cable tails should be marked and capped to identify energy state.

Report all incidents and near misses