

SAFETY ALERT

SA-227 – Use of Safety Knives

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

An incident occurred recently where an employee used a spring loaded knife to cut a palm frond that was intruding on an area that required painting. In the process of quickly cutting the frond, the knife motion continued, making contact with the employee's opposite hand that was holding the frond at the time.

This resulted in a severe cut requiring 8 stitches and the employee being placed on restricted duties whilst recovering from the injury. The employee was not wearing any gloves at the time.



Figure 1 – Image of spring load knife used to cut the palm



Figure 2. Image of approved Safety Knife

Stanley type knives or similar have been banned in the Maintenance Business for some time due to the amount of injuries that have occurred as a result of their use. The use of a Safety Knife, where the blade automatically retracts when the blade edge loses contact with a surface, is recommended for use across the business.

The knife displayed in *Figure 2* is a Martor Australia product and is an example of a suitable knife for use over long periods, with a fully automated retractable blade, designed to reduce cut injuries. PET have adopted this knife as their choice.

Across the business it is recognised that knives are used for various tasks such as opening packaging, cutting tips off tubes, cutting tape etc. however it is important that the correct tool is selected to undertake these tasks.

WHAT CAN BE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO PREVENT A SIMILAR INCIDENT FROM OCCURRING?



HOUSEKEEPING & ORDER

- ▶ Ensure housekeeping is kept up to date to avoid slips, trips and falls.



POSITIONS OF PEOPLE

- ▶ Ensure hands and feet are situated safely when using cutting implements and secure footing can be maintained.



PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Always ensure correct PPE is worn. Wear appropriate cut resistant gloves when using cutting implements or tools that present a cutting hazard.



RULES & PROCEDURES

- ▶ Ensure correct procedures are followed when purchasing and using cutting implements.
- ▶ Ensure a risk assessment is completed to determine the appropriate method to undertake the task safely and implement control measures to prevent harm.



TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

- ▶ Always ensure the right type of tool is being used to complete the task.
- ▶ Where appropriate for a Safety Knife to be used, ensure it is an approved type, with an automatic retractable blade.
- ▶ All branches to perform a review of existing knives, removing Stanley or similar type knives and replacing with an approved alternative.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

HSE Representative:	Brendan Ewington
Contact Number:	0407914100
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Report all incidents and near misses

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.