

SAFETY ALERT

240 – Forklift Refuelling

Background

An incident occurred recently where an employee was refuelling a forklift gas bottle (with LPG) and spilled gas over part of their hand, causing a cold burn. There was a blockage in the transfer line and with gas still caught in the hose, when it was disconnected gas ran out onto the employee's hand.

Investigation findings revealed;

- The nozzle of the hose used to fill the gas bottle had frozen overnight due to the below zero temperature in the area.
- The hose still held some gas in the line as it was not able to flow into the gas bottle.
- Gloves were worn however they were not suitable for the task and did not provide enough protection from the gas.



This incident is similar in nature to a previous incident where an employee received a cold burn when gas escaped from the hose while they were attempting to disconnect it from the bottle. Finding regarding this incident were also that suitable gloves were not worn and that first aid measures to treat the injury were not known.



RECOMMENDED WAYS TO CONTROL RISK

- Only trained and competent people must complete refuelling and procedures must be followed.
- Wear appropriate PPE. Cold insulating gloves and safety eyewear, goggles or face shield.
- Maintain adequate pressure in bottle ensuring it is filled within thresholds. Don't over fill as this can allow regulator to freeze up.
- Avoid moisture build up as this can freeze and cause blockages in regulators and lines.
- Complete inspection before refuelling to look for any defects. Look for leaks, cracks, bulging, defective or damaged valves, excessive corrosion or rusting and check fuel lines. Also complete checks again after connection as leaks and equipment malfunctions may not be obvious on empty gas cylinders. Where any defects are identified remove from service.
- Ensure gas line is isolated before disconnecting
- Fill in a well ventilated approved area

First aid measures for cold burns

Remove contaminated clothing and gently flush affected areas with luke warm water (30o C) for 15 minutes. Apply sterile dressing and treat as for a thermal burn. For large burns, immerse in warm water for 15 minutes. DO NOT apply any form of direct heat. Seek immediate medical attention.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

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Date of Issue:	27/09/2021

Report all incidents and near misses

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