

SAFETY ALERT

Angle Grinder Incident Resulting In Injury

Date: 21st July 2006



Photo: 4inch angle grinder fitted with a toothed timber cutting saw blade and similar type cutting bade.

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On the 19th July 2006 at 3.05pm a carpenter working in a unit at the Woollooware Bay Retirement Project was struck in the face by the angle grinder. The worker was cutting installed skirting with a 4 inch grinder equipped with a toothed saw blade, when the blade came into contact with a section of external metal angle the grinder kicked back.

The worker suffered considerable laceration to the face, sustaining injuries narrowly missing the eye.

As a result of the incident investigation conducted by the employer and the Site OHS Committee, a number of findings were made and mandatory actions required;

- Risk Assessments to be carried out to determine the correct usage of all tools and plant.
- Full face shields to be worn at all times when using, demo saws, and ALL grinders. This action required is in line with AS/NZS 1336:1997, Table 4.1 concerning 'Specific Hazards and Control Methods' for the use of PPE.
- Correct blades to be used with tools.
- Propose that toothed blades for all grinders be banned

Other Issues to Consider When Using Angle Grinders

- Angle grinders are one of the most dangerous hand tools in the construction industry
- Where possible use angle grinders with an easy to use "deadman" switch.
- Kickback can occur as already outlined, resulting in severe or fatal injuries
- Discs can shatter and explode-inspect for defects or wear
- Grinding results in fine particles lodging in the eyes and skin, consider correct PPE, full face shield, gloves, clothing and hearing protection
- Assess the situation prior to use of the tool, there may be a safer means to be used to complete the task
- Check grinder disks are correct for the task
- Is the tool tagged and electrically safe
- Is a guard fitted correctly, ensure the tool is in a good condition
- Ensure worker has received training in the use of the tool
- Tool to be suitable for both left and right handed operators
- Never use an angle grinder in an above the head position
- Allow grinder to reach run up speed before use
- Correct stance, care to operate away from the body
- Work pieces need to be correctly secured
- Ensure grinder blade has fully stopped before placing tool at rest.