



DANGERS WITH MULTI-CUTTERS AND HAND POWER TOOLS

SAFETY ALERT

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) has published a safety alert regarding multi-cutters and grinding or cutting discs on power tools and air tools.

According to the authority, there have been a number of serious incidents caused by using cutting and grinding discs on hand-held power tools and air tools. These included injuries such as amputated fingers, severed tendons and deep cuts to the face. Multi-cutters, which are tungsten tipped saw blades, were involved in most incidents, causing serious injuries. These discs were originally designed to be used on small power saws, not angle grinders.

The injuries were more serious because multi-cutters cut through materials at a faster rate, are more prone to jamming and “kickback”, and are sharper, causing wider, deeper and longer wounds.

Another hazard occurs when the multi-cutter is being used as a grinding tool. The side loading applied to the blade can cause the tungsten cutting tips to fly off the blade at high speed.

Abrasive cup stones can also explode, causing eye and penetration injuries similar to bullet wounds, and concrete saw blades have a tendency to jam on pipes or block work, causing kick-back.

Angle grinders fitted with multi-cutters should not be used unless they are fitted with full spring loaded guarding.

The authority also recommends not grinding with multi-cutters, and for power tools, discs and blades to be marked with the maximum permissible operating speed in revolutions per minute.

This maximum speed specified by the manufacturer should not be exceeded. Exclusion zones should be set up around workers using such equipment, so other persons will not be put at risk if control is lost.

Workers using hand power tools should hold the equipment with both hands. They should stand on a level surface and operate the tool in front of the body, below chest height. Workers should secure long hair, loose clothing or jewellery, and wear protective clothing.