



Petroleum Safety Significant Incident Report No. 05/2013

Use of wrong tool results in serious arm injury

Summary of incident

After a cleaning pig run of an oil pipeline, the pig (pipeline inspection gauge) was cleaned, dismantled, checked and reassembled. A cotter pin was required to complete the job. A worker involved in the pig reassembly found the lid of the plastic container of cotter pins secured with a cable tie. He decided to use a paint scraper from a nearby bench to remove the tie.

The worker pushed the scraper under the tie and twisted it until the tie broke. The edge of the scraper then struck and severely lacerated the arm holding the container, damaging tendons and an artery.

First aid was administered on site. The injured worker was transferred to the regional hospital, where he stayed overnight for medical treatment before travelling to Perth for an operation at a major hospital. The worker returned to work a week and a half later.

Contributory factors

- A written job hazard analysis (JHA) was not available for the complete pigging operation.
- Box cutters, which were suitable for this task, were supplied but not used.
- Concerns had previously been raised regarding the use of cable ties on containers as they were awkward to open. However, management had decided to continue their use.

Preventative actions

- When preparing the JHA before commencing a job, assess the individual tasks that are involved and ensure fit-for-purpose tools are available to complete those tasks.
- When safety issues are raised, include representatives of those involved in the task to ensure all risk factors are identified and addressed.
- Provide regular reminders to the workforce of the need to:
 - follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs), even where tasks are familiar and repetitive
 - select appropriate tools for the task and have them readily accessible.

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