

LP BULLETIN

Friday 17 October 2008

Bulletin 605 - 10/08 - The importance of eye protection - Worldwide

A seaman's eyesight survived a recent incident because he was wearing eye protection when a grinder disk shattered. The importance of wearing eye protection when operating hazardous tools and machinery is not to be taken lightly.

It can be seen from the image (right) that a piece of the shattered disk struck across the part of the safety goggles that protect the left eye. Had the seaman not been wearing the safety goggles then he would almost certainly have suffered serious injury and loss of an eye. Although the seaman did suffer injury to his face, the safety goggles played a vital role in preventing serious eye damage.



This image shows a crewmember operating a hand-held grinder and not wearing eye protection.

Reported incidents of grinder disks shattering are not uncommon. The danger therefore needs to be taken seriously.

Masters should ensure that their crew are properly briefed in the necessary safety precautions when operating grinders and other power tools. Disregard for on board safety rules should not be tolerated.

Operators of grinding and cutting tools should assume that the disc may shatter and should ensure that the guarding will deflect broken pieces away from themselves. The correct component parts which support and secure discs must always be used.



Engine room workshops are usually fitted with pedestal and bench grinders. UK Club ship inspectors sometimes find grinders on board with no safety guard fitted. These are sometimes removed, or not used, by crew who do not fully appreciate the risk of grinding disks shattering. A properly fitted guard will shield the user from shards of grinder disk in the event that the disk shatters while in use.

The image (left) illustrates good working practices on board ship:

- The grinder appears clean and well maintained
- Safety guards fitted
- Full-face protection available
- Good safety notices and instructions.

From the University of New South Wales, Australia:

Did you know?

- Angle grinders are one of the most dangerous tools in any workplace
- Most angle grinder injuries are from metal particles lodging in the operator's eye
- However, the most serious injuries are from kick-back, where the disc is thrust back violently towards the operator
- Discs can shatter or explode, sending pieces flying in all directions.

Wheel safety

- Cutting wheels or discs should not be used for grinding jobs, and grinding wheels should not be used for cutting jobs
- Wheels designed for a particular revolution speed should not be used on machines of different speeds
- Wheels should be used only for the specific material and purpose for which they are designed, and according to the manufacturer's recommendations
- Wheels worn small through use should be discarded and never used on smaller machines.

If subjected to pressures for which they were not designed, wheels can shatter at high speed, with the risk of serious injury to both operator and others nearby.

Note from the editor:

Grinders are not the only power tools that present a hazard where the use of eye protection is necessary.



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