



UKMHA

Safety Alert

Alert No: 0001
Date: August 2022

Disconnected Hydraulic Line

Incident Description:

The engineer was working at a customer's site on a counterbalance truck fitted with a double pallet handler attachment. Upon inspection it was discovered that the carriage rollers had failed, so the truck was moved to a safe working area to enable the removal of the attachment.

The engineer then proceeded to disconnect the bottom chains and to disconnect the hydraulic systems to allow the attachment removal.

With one foot on the concrete floor and one foot on the fork, the engineer reached over to get a spanner, whereupon the foot on the fork slipped due to oil leakage from the hydraulic hoses.

The fall resulted in an impact to the right arm and wrist.

The engineer then continued with removing the attachment to enable access to the carriage rollers. At the end of the shift, whilst putting tools away into the van, the engineer began to feel pain in and around the right wrist. The engineer drove home, then went to A & E where an x-ray determined the wrist was fractured.

Contributory Factors and Root Cause:



- **Inadequate equipment:** Improvised measures, such as the use of nitrile gloves and cable ties to capture drips from hoses, are inadequate.
- **Assessment of risk:** Continuously monitor for hazards introduced after work commences. Trip and slip hazards should be addressed before proceeding.
- **Management responsibility:** This is a reoccurring issue; therefore, managers and supervisors should take appropriate steps, including:

training – reminders – equipment - oversight

Conclusions:

- This incident is RIDDOR reportable and resulted in almost 3 weeks lost working time.
- Oil spills created by opening hydraulic lines poses both a H&S and an environmental risk.
- Engineers must be provided with the equipment necessary to complete the job safely, and this includes spill kits and temporary blanking plugs.
- When a hazard occurs, **stop work** and rectify before proceeding.

Actions:

- Oil spills result in an **immediate hazard** and must be cleaned up before continuing with the job.
- Temporary hose blanks should be fitted to reduce oil spills whenever hoses are disconnected unless self-sealing quick release couplings are present.
- Hose blanking plugs should be included as part of the engineer's equipment.
- Spill kits should be available in the immediate vicinity when working on hydraulic systems.

