



HSE Safety Alert

U.S. Pipeline, Inc.



Date:	February 04, 2015
Situation:	Medical Recordable / Grinder Brush Incident
Notification to:	All USPL Employees

Employee Hand Contacted By Grinding Brush Resulting In Laceration

A recent incident occurred on one of US Pipeline's projects that resulted in an individual receiving a laceration to his right hand which required stitches to close. This makes this incident a Medical Recordable incident and the individual was given full release to return back to his full duties.

On 01/23/2015 at approximately 2 pm on a very cold, wintery day, a welder helper was in the process of preparing to utilize a grinder with a wire brush on it to buff out a weld that had just been completed by the welder he assisted. He grabbed the grinder off the top of the pipe as he does always, and prepared to buff the weld. Two issues that contributed to the incident that he did not recognize as potential hazards for the task he was about to perform. The first is that the grinder remained plugged into an energy source which makes this tool hazardous, as there is a possibility of energizing the tool when changing the position of the grinder guard or changing out the wheel utilized by the grinder. The second is having additional bulky clothing on that created an issue with deactivating the safety switch that was located on the trigger itself. This allowed the trigger to be engaged, thus energizing the grinder by the additional bulky clothing. When the grinder engaged, it torqued from the right hand, made contact with the glove he was wearing, rolled the glove towards the fingertips exposing the top of his right hand where the wire brush made contact causing the laceration.

As the pictures below show the sequence of events that occurred leading up to the injury. After our investigation completed, we determined the following Root Causal Factors that contributed to the incident.

1. Complacency; individual became complacent performing the same activity over and over again and did not recognize or look for additional hazards (bulky clothing added) associated with this task.
2. The safety switch is located on the trigger, not a separate item on the grinder.
3. A glove was being utilized that did not protect the helpers hand from this situation.
4. The tool remained energized when adjusting or changing our parts of the grinder.



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The initial Corrective Actions that will be implemented:

1. Whenever any power tools are not in use they **MUST** be unplugged from the energy source; to include when making any adjustments or changes to the power tool. *(We are looking into talking with DeWalt to determine if there can be a double safety switch installed and a different style handle that will be more conducive for performing this type of work).*
2. Inspect and utilize only grinders that have separate safety switches on the grinder; do not use grinders that have safety switches on the trigger.
3. All helpers will be required to utilize the higher cuff welding glove that is currently in use by all welders.
4. A safety stand down with crew to discuss complacency, habits, unsafe decisions, and a refocus of identifying potential hazards associated with each and every task you perform was given the afternoon of the incident.

Provided are pictures demonstrating the incident and the injury itself.



Device Trigger – Arrow shows the safety release in on the trigger of this DeWalt grinder.



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Position of grinder – Here is the position the helper had the grinder in preparing to get in position to buff a weld. The bulky clothes he had on deactivated the safety switch located on the trigger of this grinder.





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Picture of gloved hand – Prior to the trigger engaging, the helpers hand was covered by this style of leather glove in picture 1 that has a shorter cuff. It is recommended that all helpers utilize the higher cuff welding glove that is shown in picture 2.



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Result of incident – Here is a picture of the end result of the wire brush contacting the helper's hand after being energized and rolling up the shorter glove.

It is U.S. Pipeline's intent to continue to strive forward with Corrective Actions and Lessons Learned from these unfortunate incidents, to continue to provide the safest work environment for our personnel and to not have this type of incident occur again.