

LOCATION : Greece  
Construction Site

INCIDENT TYPE:RESTRICTED DUTY

DATE: 24/07/2017

## What happened?

An excavator operator working with the automatic welding crew, was placing a soil berm over the top of a section of a pipe string, between two welds, for pipe stability.

At the same time, a welder came out of the nearby welding canopy. The welder started to walk in a straight line directly next to the pipe string with his welding mask flicked in the up position on his head. As the welder walked further and entered the line of fire the bucket of the excavator sideswiped the welder's helmet. The welder sagged down to the ground.

A paywelder operator, who had observed what had happened, promptly sounded the horn to alert the excavator operator. The excavator stopped immediately and raised the boom. The worker suffered a muscular spasm.

## Incident location

## Why did it happen?

- No exclusion zones / barriers in place.
- Welders hearing and vision impaired as the raised mask obstructed his vision and the welding hood reduced his hearing.
- The JSA and Method Statement did not cover the earth berm installation, or use of an excavator within a congested area.
- A dedicated flagman was not supplied for the excavator, so the operator was working with limited sight, as the pipe was partially obscuring his vision.
- It was the excavator operator's first day working with the automatic welding crew, as the usual operator was absent.

## How can we prevent recurrence of similar incidents?

- Flagmen should always be assigned where visibility is hindered.
- Alternative communications means between paywelders and excavators operators should be established (e.g. walkie talkies).
- Limitations in the perception of the surrounding activities and related hazards, while utilizing the welder's mask must be highlighted in the course of regular orientations.
- Simultaneously work activities not necessarily interrelated might lead to incidents if not adequately managed.



*Welder's mask worn with the visor raised*



*Recreation of the position of the excavator and worker at the time of the incident*

**HSE – is not just what you say, it's what you do!**