

Contractor Finger Injury

WHAT HAPPENED

A team of 8 Contractors were replacing filter bags in a Sepol filter. The injured party (IP) was replacing bags in one of the compartments and was knelt down. As he moved to stand up he placed his hand on the edge of the compartment when suddenly the compartment lid came down, catching his left hand and damaging his middle and ring fingers. The lids are double skinned and heavy.

The lids have a sliding locking mechanism which prevents them from closing once this mechanism has locked into the lower runner position. The most likely cause of the incident is that the locking mechanism had not fully engaged, allowing the lid to drop on to the IP, when it was inadvertently knocked. As a result of the incident the contractor lost the ends of the two fingers down to the first knuckle.



Lid in Locked Open Position



Position of IP

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

- A Risk Assessment and Method Statement had been undertaken, but they failed to identify both the hazard of the falling lids, and also the manual handling risks associated with lifting these heavy lids with only one handle.
- Do we adequately identify all the hazards in what can appear to be routine tasks? Do we involve everyone who is undertaking an activity in the risk assessment process to ensure all potential hazards are identified and everyone is aware of the necessary control measures?
- Upon investigation it was found that several of the lid locking mechanisms in the filter bank did not engage smoothly by gravity, needing additional force to be directly applied.
- Are our maintenance regimes thorough enough to check all safety devices?
- Is there an adequate reporting procedure?
- Is everyone actively encouraged to report potential hazards through the Near Miss / Hazard Alert system?
- The manufacturer's operations manual did not

identify any maintenance regime for the lids. Do we check manufacturer manuals and incorporate maintenance regimes into our own, devising additional procedures where necessary?

- A Contractor Supervisor was only metres away, but failed to check that the locking mechanism had engaged. Do we check the application of all safety devices, both for ourselves and each other?

LOCATION: CEMENT PLANT
ACTIVITY: MAINTENANCE & HOUSEKEEPING
SUB ACTIVITY: N/A

ALERT STATUS: Normal
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