

Improper Isolation of a Conveyor

WHAT HAPPENED

Contractors had been tasked to replace a conveyor on a stone feeder under a surge permit. This required an authorised employee to complete the isolation and permit, in accordance with the site isolation procedure for this task. A conveyor that should have been isolated was not, and the contractors were later observed working off this conveyor.

The contractor did raise concern regarding the isolation for this conveyor belt at the end of the first day, when leaving site, they had observed no lock on the isolation point, which was a significant distance from the feeder they had been working on. The contractor raised concern the following morning with the site, and later saw a lock on the isolation point, assumed it was safe to continue with the task. The isolation was eventually checked and confirmed to be inadequate and the task was stopped on the third day.

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

- The isolation procedures were not followed, leaving contractors to work unsupervised in an unsafe environment.
- The contractors' risk assessment and safe system of work had not been reviewed by the site.
- The contractor did not seek confirmation that the lock they saw meant that the isolation was complete, they assumed it was.
- It took too long for the site to react to the concern about the isolation raised by the contractor.
- The process for training and validation was not clear and robust enough.
- There is a concern that outsourced jobs for regular contractors are potentially not receiving the same rigorous controls that the larger, major jobs do.

Plant & Site Managers must ensure that:

- All contractors working on a site have a nominated competent employee, whose primary responsibilities are to ensure that; the contractor has received a site induction specific to the work they will be undertaking, including the requirement for isolation.
- The contractors' risk assessment and safe system of work/method statement are reviewed, and then challenged if necessary.
- All required permits are completed before work is started by the contractor.
- The work is monitored to ensure that it is being done safely and in accordance with the agreed method.

- This incident is used to remind all line managers and supervisors of the importance of taking any safety concern raised by an employee or contractor seriously and responding in a timely manner appropriate to the significance of the concern raised.
- The ongoing competency of authorised personnel on site is routinely checked and refresher training provided if required.

SAFEQUARRY EDITOR'S NOTE

+ Very often conveyor belt incidents occur because of a failure to identify the energy source(s), a failure to isolate the energy source(s), a failure to use a 'Lockout Tagout' procedure and a failure to test to prove that equipment is effectively isolated.

+ Work of this nature could be a focus for a 'visible leadership' conversation.

+ A range of good practice materials are available on safequarry including

Short videos on Isolation: Lockout Tagout

<http://www.safequarry.com/toolbox/CEMEXsuiteofvisualaidsonisolationproceduresLO>

LOCATION:
ACTIVITY:
SUB ACTIVITY:

OTHER
MAINTENANCE & HOUSEKEEPING
N/A

ALERT STATUS:
DATE ISSUED:
INCIDENT No:

Normal
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