

Operator suffers allergic reaction when doused in cleaning fluid whilst using pressure washer to clean plant

WHAT HAPPENED

A surfacing operative was doused in cleaning fluid (Bitukleen No.3).

The operative was cleaning down his machine paver using the wash-down system on the paver, which consists of a pump-driven hand-held lance, mounted on a retracting hose reel.

On retracting the reel, the lance became detached from the hose, and as the pump was still running, the fluid continued to flow from the hose, covering the operator on his face, head and down his top.

The operative suffered an allergic reaction to the material (even though it was not classed as an irritant or hazardous) resulting in a skin reaction on his scalp. This has caused him to be absent from work.

A review of the incident revealed that the hose clip connecting the hose to the lance had failed.

Contributory factors

1. Not wearing a hard hat or face visor – may have reduced the operators exposure to the fluid.
2. Operative has a previously diagnosed underlying skin condition.



LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

1. Ensure plant and equipment is well maintained, in this case the hose clip connection failed under the force of pulling the lance against the hose.
2. Ensure PPE is worn as detailed in the COSHH assessment. In this case, if he had been wearing a hard hat and visor, the extent of the skin contact would have been reduced.
3. Ensure above points are applied to all pressure washing activities, including vehicle cleaning.

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

ALERT STATUS: Normal
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