Steel Fibre Penetrates Knee Cap

WHAT HAPPENED

In a recent incident an employee needed an operation to remove a steel fibre that had become lodged behind his kneecap following a fall onto a stack of spilled steel fibres.

The employee had been given the task of loading truckmixers with the fibres, emptying them from cardboard boxes onto a mobile conveyor. The boxes had been stored outside on pallets under plastic covers. Due to heavy rain the boxes had become soft and were breaking down, causing the fibres to spill onto the ground.

The site on the day was particularly busy with around 1.5 tonnes / 60 boxes of fibres being loaded onto the conveyor by hand prior to the incident. The employee did state he was clearing the fibres between each load, however the damaged boxes were collapsing at regular intervals.

Just before lunch time a truckmixer driver backed onto the conveyor and saw the employee laid on the ground close to the tail end of the conveyor. He immediately went to assist the injured person

and took him to the canteen where he was made comfortable and given tea to drink by a colleague. After around 30 minutes the employee resumed his task and continued loading the fibres onto the conveyor. He then drove himself home at the end of the shift.

That evening whilst at home his knee felt sore and, on examination, he found a fibre protruding from the skin which he was able to remove himself. The following day however, his knee joint was stiff so he attended his local hospital where an X ray revealed another steel fibre lodged behind his knee cap. He was admitted for surgery the following day to have the fibre removed in an operation involving removal of the knee cap. As a result the employee was off work for 10 weeks.

Damaged Boxes

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

•Are materials stored correctly on site?

• Is housekeeping maintained to a high standard with weather conditions accounted for?

•Are tasks correctly risk assessed and Safe Systems of Work or Safe Operating Procedures developed?

•Is consideration given to individual capability and workload when planning a new activity?

•Are problems with materials and equipment reported?

•Is it ensured operatives have breaks at correct intervals, with job rotation being used as appropriate?

•Do you use the Near Miss / Hazard Alert system to highlight any potential health and safety issues?

Steel Fibre

LOCATION:	**READYMIX OR MORTAR PLANT**	**ALERT STATUS:**	**Normal**
ACTIVITY:	**MANUAL HANDLING AND STORAGE**	**DATE ISSUED:**	**27/11/2012**
SUB ACTIVITY:	**N/A**	**INCIDENT No:**	**00345**