

NZ Safety Alert

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe

September 2019

Crowbar severs electrical cable



A crowbar was left leaning upright against a light vehicle in the workshop when workers left for smoko. The crowbar fell severing an electrical extension cable on the floor of the workshop.

An RCD activated and automatically shut off power to the extension cable.

The workshop contained racks for storing tools including crowbars and electrical cables when not being used however it is common on many sites for small tools, extension leads etc. to be left at a job site while workers are absent on breaks.

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 24 months to June 2019 show 6% of all incidents (122 incidents) result from pressure release incidents, 40% of which are due to uncontrolled release of electricity.

You need to ensure that:

1. All items of plant, including tools and leads etc. are fundamentally stable while being used or not. This means placing tools where they cannot fall, disconnecting power leads and rolling away leads and hoses, and putting tools away in storage racks when not being used.
2. Regular workplace inspections are conducted to identify housekeeping issues and set-up of work areas that could put workers at risk of harm.
3. Operators are trained and assessed as competent to operate plant and equipment, including insuring it is fundamentally stable.
4. Lessons from incidents, including learnings, are shared with all workers

Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.