

Abrasive blasting incident

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What happened?

An abrasive blaster and painter was blasting a section of steel structure in a mine preparation plant. He received injuries to his forehead when blast material (garnet) and compressed air penetrated the face shield of his helmet, (see photo).

How did it happen?

The person was working in an awkward position due to the shape and layout of the structure being blasted, and at some stage the nozzle was pointed towards the helmet.

It was also found that the PPE, as a last barrier in the hierarchy of controls, was not implemented as per design requirements.

Comments

Abrasive blasting activities on site are usually conducted by contractors. Given the hazards in abrasive blasting, it is important that contract management processes are effective and include:

- contractor selection and engagement
- broad brush risk assessments
- work planning
- development and implementation of SOP's
- competency verification
- task risk assessment
- contract management and supervision
- PPE selection and use
- correct, adequate and maintained tools / equipment
- inspections and observations of work practices to verify controls are in place.

Recommendations

Mines could utilise the Work Health and Safety (Abrasive Blasting) Code of Practice 2015 to assist in developing and implementing abrasive blasting as part of the Safety and Health Management System. The code of practice also includes guidance on PPE use and selection.



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