

NZ Safety Alert

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

October 2019

Worker injured using grinder

A worker was using a grinder on the edge of a steel bar when the grinder kicked back at him. His overalls became entangled with the tool around waist height. This caused a tiny abrasion to his stomach area. First Aid treatment was applied. No further medical assistance was required.

Handheld grinders present many hazards including:

- Entanglement with turning wheel or disk
- Projectiles from incorrectly used wheels or disks
- Projectiles from damaged disks
- Contact with an uncontrolled grinder
- Electrical current

It is essential that grinders are used as designed, with appropriate wheels and/or disks.



You need to ensure that:

1. Operators are trained and assessed as competent to operate handheld equipment including grinders.
2. When using handheld tools, operators wear tight fitting clothes without loose or dangling items to avoid the risk of entanglement.
3. You always use wheels and/or as per the Original Equipment Manufacturers specifications.
4. Hand tools are always operated with appropriate guards in place and with the use of suitable Personal Protective Equipment.
5. Regular workplace inspections are conducted to identify damaged or worn tools and attachments.
6. You regularly inspect and test grinders

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 24 months to June 2019 show 5% of all incidents (88 incidents) result from entanglement incidents, 71 of which are due entanglement with plant.

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