



Back Strain from Manual Cable Pull

WHAT HAPPENED?

During installation works, a worker experienced delayed lower back pain following a manual cable pull undertaken the previous day. The task required sustained physical effort while manually pulling secondary cables through a restricted route around transformer bunds. During the pull, the worker may have temporarily lost synchronisation with the rest of the crew, briefly taking the full load of the cable, which resulted in a musculoskeletal strain.

ACTION TAKEN

- First aid provided to the injured worker.
- Incident investigated and task reviewed.
- Corrective actions communicated to crews via toolbox talks.
- Emphasis placed on Take 5 approach to fatigue management and safe manual-handling techniques.

ROOT CAUSE

- Manual cable pulling undertaken without effective load management or coordination controls.
- Loss of team synchronisation during the pull resulted in uneven load sharing.
- Space restrictions around transformer bunds prevented the use of mechanical aids.

LEARNINGS

- Manual handling tasks involving sustained force present a high risk of musculoskeletal injury.
- Cable-pulling activities must be well coordinated, with clear communications.
- Workers should reposition regularly and take short breaks to manage fatigue.
- Where mechanical aids cannot be used, tasks must be reassessed, and the risk reduced through work method changes.
- Stop work immediately if load sharing is lost or if conditions change.

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