



Safety Advice 32-2013 (Aug) (NZ)

Incident Alert 4215 below pertains to a water blast incident causing a serious harm penetration injury that occurred in August 2013. This Incident Alert is shared with the wider industry to raise awareness of water blasting hazards, courtesy of the StayLive Group, and is published as EEA Safety Advice 32-2013

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Incident Alert Form

TITLE DESCRIPTION:

High Pressure Water Injection Injury

THE DETAILS (ATTACH PHOTOS):

On 23 August 2013 a contractor performing high pressure water blasting inside the generator penstock received a high pressure water injection injury to his left foot.

The contractor stepped off the work platform to remove debris from the floor of the penstock. As he adjusted his footing to brace against the pressure of the water lance the contractor slipped causing the water lance to cross over his left foot twice puncturing his gumboot and injecting water and debris into his foot creating a puncture wound which required minor surgery to remove water, air and contaminants..



CORRECTIVE ACTION OR IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN:

1. A thorough risk assessment is completed prior to high pressure water blasting work activities being undertaken.
2. Ensure any person performing high pressure water blasting wears fit for purpose personal protective equipment i.e. Kevlar lined overalls and spats/gaiters designed to protect foot wear.
3. Ensure persons operating high pressure water blasting equipment have sufficient skills and training to operate high pressure water blasting equipment i.e. training records etc.
4. Ensure adequate fall protection and head protection such as a five point impact safety helmet is worn and the person is attached at all times.
5. Ensure the length of the water lance is such that the head of the lance cannot inadvertently come into contact with any part of the user's body.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION (INCLUDE DIAGRAMS OR PHOTOS IF NECESSARY):

The ensuing investigation identified:

1. The personal protective equipment used by the contractors was not fit for purpose.
2. Although the contractor had significant experience in this field he was unaware of the extent and potentially fatal consequences of an injury sustained as a result of a high pressure water injection.



KEY LEARNINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS AVAILABLE AT THIS STAGE:

Key learning's identified:

1. Where work to be undertaken is of a hazardous nature such as high pressure water blasting, clarification should be sought from the contractor at the tender phase on how work activities including safety procedures align with the applicable AS/NZS standard or equivalent international standard in this case AS/NZS 4233.1.1999 High Pressure Water (Hydro) jetting systems, Part 1 Guidelines for safe operation and maintenance.