

Issued to:

Location:

SAFETY BULLETIN SB 5/2016

Use of Knives at Work

Background

There have recently been a number of knife related injuries involving staff and contractors, which have occurred mainly as a result of either; the incorrect use of a knife; or through the incorrect knife for the task being used.

Examples of recent incidents include;

- A colleague stripping the sheath off a cable when the knife slipped and cut his hand,
- A colleague stripping the outer sheath of a Wavecon cable with a core knife, and as pressure was applied the knife slipped and puncture his leg which required stitches to be administered at hospital,
- A contractor was using a knife to trim the end of a plastic water pipe when it slipped and penetrated his leg above his knee which also required stitches to be administered at hospital.

Considerations

1. Always consider whether an alternative tool can be used for the task instead of a knife. If a knife has to be used, is it the correct type of knife for the task being undertaken?
2. Ensure any material to be cut is firmly supported and prepared ready for cutting.
3. Do not use your body to support the material to be cut.
4. Never cut towards yourself, always take care and cut away from your body, ensuring there are no other persons in the vicinity of the blade sweep that could be injured if you or the blade slips.

Reminders

1. Always carry out a suitable and sufficient site specific risk assessment before commencing work to determine how the task can be carried out safely and avoid injuries.
2. Select suitable hand protection on both hands – use gloves with a high cut resistance, that still allow the material to be cut and the knife to be controlled safely while undertaking the work.