

FOR ISSUE TO WHOLESALE

# SHE ALERT

## Unintentional release of methanol to bund

### What happened?

Whilst removing a drain line valve blank on a methanol tank, approximately two cubic metres (2,000 litres) of methanol fully drained into the bund. The methanol was immediately and safely removed from the bund by means of a vacuum tanker that was already in place to receive the methanol via a hosed connection. The handle of the isolation valve on the drain line indicated that it was in the closed position (see figure 1). The operator removing the blank was splashed with a small amount of methanol to the chest area of his overalls. The operator drenched his overalls with water, was medically examined and discharged without treatment.



Figure 1: Handle indicating valve closed.



Figure 2: Handle in closed position but open path through valve.



Figure 3: Shaft marker (with handle removed) identifying valve in open position.

### Investigation Outcome

The incident investigation showed that during a previous modification or maintenance, the handle on the valve had been inserted onto a square shaft at 90° to the position that it should have been (see figure 2). This meant that the handle indicated that the valve was closed, however in reality it was open.

### What action is required?

#### Everyone:

- Ensure that the PPE worn for the task is as required by the COSHH assessment.
- When isolating similar valves, i.e. those with a square shaft where there is the potential to install the handle at 90° to the correct position, confirm the valve status by checking the markers on the shaft (see figure 3).

#### Supervisors

- Ensure that all Safe System of Work (SSoW) requirements, including an instruction to undertake the task is in place prior to commencing work. Where appropriate, ensure that the instruction captures the need to verify the valve status by removing the handle.

#### Managers:

- Ensure that procedures are developed and communicated when new critical tasks are identified.
- Ensure that all valves and associated equipment relating to process vessels are included in your maintenance and inspection programmes.

Communication by (✓)	LSG	Notice board	✓	Tool-box talk	Team brief
Communication complete by (✓)	1 week	2 weeks	1-month	✓	2-months

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