

# Safety and health alert

# 16/96 Welders killed by falling beams

---

## Incident

Two welders at a steel fabrication workshop in Kewdale were killed working on heavy steel beams, in two separate incidents in May and July 1996.

On both incidents, the one metre plus steel beams were upright and resting on metal skids. In the first incident, the welder had moved the beam with an overhead crane. He removed the slings and raised them from the beam, but one open hook caught the top of the beam, pulling the beam over onto the worker.

In the second incident, an apprentice prepared the beam for automatic sub arc welding. As he ground the last brace off, the I beam separated from the bottom flange and crushed the apprentice.

## Factors

The beams were not adequately stabilized.

The workers were not trained in rigging or dogging.

The workers were inadequately supervised and trained for the task. Because the workers were employed by an outside agency, the workshop employers failed to fully accept responsibility for them.

## Recommendations

1. Provide a safe system of work for work on steel beams and in particular ensure the balance and stability of the beams at all times.
2. Use trained personnel for high hazard tasks, for example a rigger or dogger.
3. Employers must ensure employees are appropriately instructed, trained and supervised for the task at hand.
4. Employing companies of hired labour must ensure their responsibilities and obligations in accordance with section 19(4) of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* are complied with.
5. Specific job assessments must be undertaken so everyone involved can be informed of the identified hazards and how they are to be managed.

## Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site

[www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au), or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au).

A414269

Date: March 1996

