

Safety and health alert

21/00 Lifting concrete liners by mechanical means

Incident

A plumber engaged a machine operator to install two 1500 x 1500mm water soak wells in a driveway at Doubleview.

The photograph below shows cracking in a soak well placed onto the edge of a concrete traffic lid and a piece of concrete that had broken off during the lifting of the other soak well. The piece of concrete that broke off occurred as the machine operator attempted to lift the soak well using chains slung through the soak well openings.

No person was injured although a fatality or serious injury could easily have resulted if there were workers in the vicinity of the soak well during the lift.

Factors

The cause of the cracking damage to the soak wells could not be determined however it is possible that:

- The lifting procedure used caused the damage to the soak wells;
- As the soak wells were unloaded they were dropped, resulting in the fracture of the soak well.
- Placing the soak well partially on a concrete traffic lid could have created unnecessary pressure on the soak well causing it to crack.

Recommendations

1. Wherever practicable ensure that soak wells are stored vertically and on even ground.
2. Consider the use of a spreader bar when lifting the soak well, avoiding pressure to the sides of the soak well.
3. Manufacturers must ensure that the design and construction of a soak well is such that it can be safely slung and lifted. Purpose designed lifting points are strongly recommended.
4. When lifting loads ensure as far as practicable that no loads are suspended or travel over a person.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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Date: June 2000



Department of Consumer
and Employment Protection
Government of Western Australia

