

21/01 Boilermaker loses eye in cutting disc accident

Incident

A boilermaker lost his right eye due to the failure of a 127mm cutting disc which shattered whilst cutting a piece of 1.6mm steel plate.

For eye protection the boilermaker was wearing a welding helmet with the dark filter in the lifted position, leaving his viewing area protected by a clear lens and a 150 magnification lens held in place by a spring clip.

The boilermaker who had a shoulder injury was working at home using a small angle grinder. His injured shoulder failed to support the angle grinder during the cutting operation, causing the cutting disc to jam and shatter. A piece of the disc hit and penetrated his welding helmet in the vicinity of the viewing area, causing the injury.

Factors

1. The boilermaker was using an angle grinder when not physically fit to perform the task in a safe manner.
2. Welding helmets are designed to protect the welder from sparks and splatter, ie for light impact duties only.

Recommendations

1. Persons using cutting discs on angle grinders should be mindful of their physical ability to operate the equipment in a safe manner.
2. Appropriate eye protection should be worn in relation to the task performed. In this instance a high impact face shield would have given greater protection from injury.

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.

Date: November 2001

A413118

