

Operational Alert's inform Signal Mutual Members of serious incidents within the Mutual which resulted in permanent disability, death or a significant near miss. If you have similar operations, please share this Operational Alert with operation managers, supervisors, equipment operators, and all affected employees. It is imperative that management, at all levels review their operations for similar hazardous conditions, or acts and their controls.

## INCIDENT: Handheld Electric Grinders

### SUMMARY

Members have reported increased numbers of personnel injuries while operating electric 4" and 7" handheld electric grinders. Below is a compilation of common grinder incidents. These incidents may sound all too familiar and can be brushed off as "the user should have known better." Always address and take action on the root causes!

### COMPLIED INCIDENT DESCRIPTIONS

- Grinder kicked back striking mouth.
- Grinding deck and grinder kicked back cutting knee.
- Using grinder to cut clip, grinder cut hand.
- Grinding overhead, grinder kicked back striking face.
- Grinding in tight area, grinder stuck thigh.
- Grinding deck, grinder stuck, kicked back twisting wrist.
- Changing grinding disks & activated tool, injured.
- Grinding when the grinder kicked back & hit nose.
- Cutting weld, grinder jumped & cut knuckle.
- Using grinder, it caught & kicked back cut chin.
- Cutting pipe with grinder, pipe moved and cut thumb.
- Moving grinder, hit button it jumped & hit wrist.

### TIPS

**Some Signal Member shipyards are taking advantage of tool manufacturer technology, which is making important contributions to protect the end-user. Here are some examples:**

- Simple searches will find grinders with brakes or clutches that assist in a rapid wheel stop when the switch is turned off and/or a wheel pinch is detected.
- Grinders are available with equipped with switch protection that can be operated along the entire length of the handle. Providing users full control over the tool even in difficult working positions.
- Grinders are available equipped with a quick release to allow personnel to reposition the guard. Allowing allowing quick and easy guard adjustments.

[Brake and Clutch Example](#)

[Learn More about tool control](#)

[Quick guard adjust example](#)

[\(Example Instructional Manual\)](#)

*Always read & review the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) operating manuals/ videos during the education processes.*

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## CONSIDERATIONS

**TASK PREVIEW completed by** team leads and employees together. Identify tool needs and confirm OEM training / instruction.

- Confirm the correct tool for the tasks planned. Ensure tools and guards are in good working order.
- Confirm work area is safe for grinding work and personnel.
- Self-check and peer-check for needed PPE.
- Evaluate work areas for unusual conditions. Confined grinding surfaces; overhead; preserved surfaces; surrounding work, etc.
- Verify the grinder equipped with handle(s), guards, proper RPM wheel. Verify switch properly functions, power cord free of defects.
- Consider replacing older tools with new grinders with additional built-in safety precautions.
- Managers and Leads, be approachable when peers / team members raise concerns. Deal with the risks immediately.

**PRE-JOB BRIEF.** The team lead must be visible in the work area with all employees involved in discussion of the **TASK PREVIEW** results.

- Whenever uncertainty, confusion, doubt exists during the brief, use: **S.T.A.R. (Stop-Think-Act-Review)**.
- All those involved in the task discussed must be comfortable the safety controls planned prior to start of the work.
- All employees must know their **STOP WORK RESPONSIBILITY** and **AUTHORITY** for operational uncertainty.

**AT RISK ACTS (ARA'S).** Proactively search ARA's such as: rushing, overconfidence, ineffective message, flawed controls.

- Never assume personnel know how to use grinders. This is industrial equipment and is a learned process.
- Continually monitor for rushing co-workers, shortcuts, incorrect tool use or tools without guards and/or handles.
- Stay alert for other work activities introduced into the work area that creates unwanted conditions and report them immediately.
- Monitor for unreported flaws or flawed processes, procedures and or controls that create At-Risk-Acts to occur.

**Remember, the next person harmed could be you or someone's *Mother, Father, Daughter or Son.***

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