Incident or Event

A worker was lifting a vehicle on a hoist when he noticed a pinhole leak in a hydraulic line. He attempted to cover the leak with his finger which resulted in hydraulic fluid being injected into his finger and out his fingernail on the other side. The employer called the emergency room and faxed in a copy of the SDS. The worker was assessed by a Doctor at the hospital, bandaged up and sent home. The next day the worker noted his finger was red and looked infected. He went back to the hospital where the Doctor gave him antibiotics and sent him home once again. A few day later the finger looked worse and the worker was in considerable pain. He went back to the hospital and was told the finger would have to be amputated due to poisoning by the hydraulic fluid.

Injection injuries can occur when a sharp object (e.g., needle, high pressure liquid) punctures the skin and injects a chemical (or virus) directly into the bloodstream. The chemical may harm organs which are far away from the original point of entry, as well as where they entered the body.

Outcomes

The incident resulted in a permanent injury and lengthy time loss claim with WCB.

Causal Factors

Lack of Hazard Assessment – A Hazard Assessment to identify hazards and controls was not performed.

Lack of Training – Worker had not been trained to perform maintenance/inspection on a vehicle lift, the dangers of a hydraulic leak, or emergency first aid procedures. (Do not use your hands to search for leaks. Check for leaks by passing a piece of cardboard or wood over the suspected area)

Inadequate Emergency Procedures – The Emergency plan should have had detailed procedures to follow in a medical emergency. The Employer had the right idea in faxing the SDS to the hospital, but sending it with the worker would have been a better option.

Shared Learning

Know Your Responsibilities – Supervisors should be trained on their responsibilities and role as they pertain to safety. Workers should be trained on safe use of equipment and, should know their responsibility to report unsafe working conditions or equipment in need of service.

Assess Risks – This is critical when working with high hazard equipment such as vehicle lifts

Establish Expectations – Train and educate workers on the limitations of equipment, conditions of safe use, and on established rules. (i.e. lift safety requirements)

Discussion

Leaders should review the above at a meeting and use the following questions to engage their teams to identify similar hazards. Leaders should note answers, follow up, implement corrective actions, and positively reinforce worker responsiveness.

1. Where do we have similar hazards?

   _____

2. Where do we or have we performed similar tasks or processes?

   _____

3. Which of the causes associated with the incident are common in our facility?

   _____

4. Where else can we apply the shared learning?

   _____

5. For any similar hazards in our workplace, what is the level of risk?

   _____

Likelihood	Likely	Medium Risk	High Risk	Extreme Risk
	Unlikely	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
	Highly Unlikely	Minimal Risk	Low Risk	Medium Risk
		Slightly Harmful	Harmful	Extremely Harmful
		Consequences		

6. What can we do to eliminate or reduce the risk?

Hazard	Risk (R/Y/G)	Control Plan	Due Date

SIGN: Workers Involved in this Shared Learning exercise:

Name	Signature	Date