**Health and Safety Alert No. 34**

**Wrist Injury & Power Tools**

**Summary:**
The Injured Person (IP) was drilling a hole into the supporting bracket crossbar to fix the pipe bracket. When doing so the mesh of the battery drill snagged resulting in the drill to rotate anti-clockwise leading the IP’s right wrist to twist.

**Contributing factor:**
- A handle is provided with the tool but it was not being used. There was nothing to prevent the operative in using the handle (i.e. no obstruction in the way).

**Root cause of the injury:**
- Holes had to be re-drilled as the brackets did not fit into the existing one.
- The use of a drill was not foreseen. As a result the activity was not risk assessed and men were not briefed on control measures.

**Conclusion / Learning:**
The drill should have been used with its handle as the movement of the drill, once snagged, was anti-clockwise. Having the handle fixed horizontally (held by the left hand) give less control that having the handle positioned vertically (for a right handed person).

An alternative sequence of work and buying into the change control process should have prevented such injury. In this instance:

1) Brackets should have first been “tested” on the pre-drilled holes to make sure that holes were fit for purpose.
2) Additional holes should have been drilled from the surface, on each independent component, prior to erecting the tri-mast.
3) Change control: any change to an approved method of work OR any additional work not described in the safe method of work should be highlighted and taken into consideration.

**Note:** This is the second time where an operative sustained an injury related to a drill bit being snagged and handles not being used. (May 2012 & November 2012).

For more info, please contact the H&S Team or call 0203 463 1800

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