

Poor Manual Handling Techniques led to RIDDOR Incident

What Happened?

On the 16th March 2011 at 09:20 a general operative was requested to lift a ductile cover into a frame of an inspection chamber. During this activity the IP pulled his lower back. This led him to be away from work for more than 3 days, so is reportable under RIDDOR.

The immediate cause of the injury was incorrect lifting procedure for the type of cover being moved. Two lifting eyes were provided in the cover. Only one had been cleaned out. Therefore, only one lifting key had been used to replace the cover. This operation required two keys to be used to provide the correct balance.

Prior to the incident the team were engaged in removing the concrete surround holding the frame in place. A briefing had been undertaken detailing the work required, but the removal of frames did not form part of the proposed work or team brief.

Lessons for the Group

No work to be undertaken which has not been included in daily team briefing.

All work must be covered by an appropriate method statement and risk assessment.

Manual handling should be included in operative induction training – focusing on the type of manual handling to be undertaken on the specific project.

This also highlights the issues associated with using labour only operatives not familiar with construction activities. This is associated with competence management and the importance of ensuring that operatives are capable of undertaking activities asked of them – even those tasks which more experienced staff consider “simple”.

There has been a review of manual handling training within MGJV leading to:

- Correct manual handling techniques being taught during the Stand Down Day
- Review of the manual handling toolbox and ensuring this is briefed regularly
- Review of induction to ensure manual handling is included
- Method statements and risk assessment to include manual handling (where appropriate)

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