

Shared Learning

Critical Risk: Stored energy

Water blasting roof - Injury

Two contractors were water blasting the roof of the power station to clean the surface before applying a waterproofing topcoat. The roof is flat, with a concrete-set handrail around the perimeter. One worker was operating the water blaster, while the other was assisting by maneuvering the waterline to improve access. During this process, the assisting worker slipped on a recently water-blasted section of the roof. As he was falling, his hard hat fell off, and the water jet briefly made contact with his head, causing an abrasion injury.

Staff onsite were immediately alerted, and first aid was provided. Work was stopped for the day, and the injured worker was instructed to seek a medical assessment.

Location: Roof of Station

- **PPE Suitability:** Although the contractors were wearing PPE, including safety boots, safety glasses, and hard hats, the hard hat lacked a chin strap. Always ensure that appropriate PPE is selected based on the specific hazards involved in the task. In this case, a chin-strap hard hat/safety helmet would have provided better protection from injury.
- **Work Area Safety:** Only those directly required for the operation of the equipment should be in the immediate work area (line of fire zone) . Use exclusion zones and barriers to separate other workers from potential hazards and maintain a safe distance for observers.
- **Identifying Hazards:** Stay alert for unexpected hazards. The section of the roof where the worker slipped had a different traction due to a historic paint job, which may have contributed to the fall. Regularly inspect work areas for anything that's different or unusual.
- **Risk assessment:** The use of a crane to lift materials onto the roof (a critical risk) was well considered and the key focus of the pre-works safety induction. It's a good reminder to also stay alert to less obvious hazards that can still pose harm.
- **Incident Response:** A prompt decision was made to stop work, and the injured worker was advised to seek medical attention and rest before returning to site. The incident was then reported to health and safety. Prompt responses allow for proper follow-up and support, ensuring the well-being of all involved.

Location of incident

