

Strimmer Blade Injury

Document No: IW-HSQE-SA-24

Approved By: James Cullen

Revision: 1.00

Effective Date: 10/09/2018

1. What Happened?

An operative was tasked with cutting back some vegetation overgrowth to expose a scour valve. A strimmer fitted with cord was initially being used for the task however as the vegetation became denser the cord was not sufficiently strong to cut through the overgrowth.

The operative decided to change the cutter head by removing the cord attachment and securing a brush cutter blade to the strimmer. The operative resumed the cutting back



of the vegetation but after approximately 10 minutes the brush cutter blade loosened and detached from the strimmer whilst in use. The blade made contact with the operative's leg where it cut through his safety wellington boots. This resulted in a deep laceration to the front of his right ankle. The operative was brought to hospital where the injury was assessed. The operative was found to have suffered lacerated tendons which required surgery.

2. Immediate Actions

- ✓ The operative was immediately brought to the Accident & Emergency department of the nearest hospital.
- ✓ Works on site were ceased and the site was closed until an investigation was initiated and complete.
- ✓ The Health & Safety Authority were notified as this was a Reportable Incident.

3. Further Actions

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- ✓ An accident investigation was undertaken and it was found that while the operative had previously received training in the use of brush cutters, the operative did not securely attach the blade to the strimmer head.

Following the incident the contractor involved (PSCS role) carried out the following actions:

- ✓ Prohibited the use of strimmer cutting blades from all their sites.
- ✓ Communicated the incident details to all their employees.
- ✓ Completed a review of activity risk assessments, training and re-inducted all personnel before work recommenced on site.

Actions to prevent a similar incident at your work area:

- ✓ Ensure the equipment being used is suitable for the task – risk assessments should be carried out for all tasks being undertaken.
- ✓ Ensure equipment has the appropriate safety guards in place and the guards are in good condition.
- ✓ Where an item of equipment has a possibility of multiple attachments, ensure the attachments are suitable as per manufacturers guidelines, fit for purpose and appropriate for the task being undertaken.
- ✓ Training should be provided to operatives for any equipment they are required to operate.
- ✓ If changing the cutter heads of strimmer's, ensure the attachments are securely fastened using the appropriate tools.

4. Further Information

For further information on this safety alert please contact hsqe@water.ie

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5. Distribution list

Internal		
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