Grinders Fatality File

Fatality: grinder incident

A fatality occurred during preparation of surfaces for welding. A welder was using an angle grinder for the preparation work when the disk of the grinder disintegrated. The hand-held angle grinder was fitted with a 230mm diameter cutting-off wheel, and when it disintegrated, fragments penetrated the victim’s chest and abdomen. He was taken to hospital by rescue helicopter but died the same day.

The investigation showed that the angle grinder and cutting disk were not compatible and that the angle grinder had not been fitted with a guard

The company involved has reiterated that grinding machines should always be used in accordance with manufacturers’ instructions, noting in particular that:

- the maximum speed marked on the abrasive wheel should always be greater than the maximum rated speed of the grinder.
- grinding wheels should not exceed the recommended maximum diameter for any given grinding machine.
- worn down wheels from other machines should not be used.
- grinding tools should never be used without the wheel guard attached to the tool and positioned for maximum safety.
- abrasive wheels should be stored and handled with care. They should be inspected for chips and cracks before installation and any apparently damaged wheels taken out of use, marked and stored for inspection/disposed of securely.