Power Tool Safety Fatality File

Worker killed by piece of metal ejected from unguarded angle grinder

In June 2021, a worker died from injuries sustained while he was using a 9-inch (230mm) angle grinder to cut the base of a structural steel member at a commercial construction site in Brisbane. It appears a small metal shard was violently ejected from the cutting work and struck his neck. No guarding was fitted to the angle grinder at the time.

Safety issues

Angle grinders have been involved in many serious incidents before this one, including fatalities. Common injuries are amputated fingers, severed tendons and deep cuts to the face, upper body, or legs. Incidents involving angle grinders can occur in all industry sectors.

The increased power and size of a 9-inch (230mm) angle grinder can cause more severe kickback and gyroscopic effect as the grinder is more difficult to control than smaller grinders. It’s important to note that a risk assessment to identify alternative methods and tools should be carried out prior to selecting a larger angle grinder.