Saws Grinders – Portable Abrasive Saws and Grinders Fatality File

Worker killed using the wrong tool: Coroner.

A Christchurch man killed when a cutting tool exploded into his chest had been using the machine in an unsafe manner, a coroner says.

John Terence Hebden was killed at his workplace in Redwood's Sturrock's Rd on April 22, last year, when a blade on the disc grinder he was using suddenly exploded and shattered into pieces.

The 64-year-old, who owned JT Hebden Building and Construction, had been rebuilding a trailer when the accident happened, causing a large segment of the disc to become embedded in his chest and stomach area.

In findings released today, coroner Richard McElrea said Hebden was normally careful and worked in a safe manner, but the self-employed builder had been using the wrong tool for the job.

Pathologist Dr Andrew Miller confirmed Hebden died from a massive haemorrhage, caused by a "chop-type" injury involving his anterior chest wall, heart, diaphragm, stomach and spleen.

There was no alcohol or anything else of note detected in his system.

Evidence from WorkSafe New Zealand stated the tool Hebden was using was fitted with an oversized and obsolete disc and did not have a fixed guard in place.

Health and safety inspector Andrew Lightburn told the coroner the tool was meant to be used on a portable cut-off saw, rather than

as an Saw grinder as it was “oversized and underrated” for such work.

McElrea said Saw grinders should always have a fixed guard in place between the disc or abrasive wheel and the operator, and that the maximum speed of a disc or abrasive wheel should never been exceeded.

He recommended WorkSafe New Zealand inform relevant industries of the dangers highlighted by Hebden’s death.