

No: NR 270

Network Rail Safety Bulletin

Use of petrol driven Stihl Saw: Burns to the leg and hand. Bermondsey Dive Under Project.

This bulletin is for the attention of:

Infrastructure Projects, Network Operations, Asset Management, NDS and Contractors.

Background

On 21st November 2012, on the Bermondsey Dive Under Project, (part of the Thameslink Programme) an operative was cutting back 32mm thick reinforcement bars that were protruding from recently constructed piles, using a petrol driven Stihl Saw. As he was cutting through a bar, he was unaware that he was being doused with fuel that was escaping from the petrol filler cap. Sparks generated from the cutting, ignited the petrol, which in turn set fire to his right trouser leg and his hi-visibility jacket. The injured person has been diagnosed with serious burns to his right leg and is to remain in hospital pending skin graft surgery.



Investigation

Although the event is still subject to investigation, the most likely immediate cause(s) of this incident appear to be that petrol was able to escape from its tank, due to a defective filler cap and/or the fuel filler cap had not been secured correctly, following the refuelling of the saw.

The saw has been sent to the Health and Safety Laboratory in Buxton, Derbyshire (a division of the Health and Safety Executive) for further analysis.

An investigation has also been set up to review the work methodology, the appropriateness of the tool for the task, as well as understanding whether the PPE and the training and competence of those involved in this activity was adequate.

Action

- Pre-use checks are required to be undertaken on machinery/tools in order to establish that they are fit for purpose, including making sure that the 'O' ring seal on the fuel cap is in good condition.
- The hand held operation of a Stihl Saw (or any other abrasive wheels) must be in accordance with the manufacturer's manual and supported by a risk assessment. This is particularly relevant in this instance, in relation to cutting with the disc/wheel in the horizontal position.
- Consideration must be given to alternative methods such as hydraulic cutting equipment for the removal of vertically protruding reinforcement bar from piles

If you have any safety concerns, work should be stopped immediately and your concerns reported.