



Safety alert 1/2013

Fatal injury from heating hydraulic cylinder

The purpose of this Safety Alert is to highlight the dangers of applying heat to sealed hydraulic cylinders.

Background

Recently a 38-year-old man died when a hydraulic cylinder he was heating with an oxy acetylene torch exploded. The employee was heating a sealed hydraulic cylinder to remove a shaft at the bottom of the cylinder. Heat from the oxy acetylene torch may have overheated the hydraulic oil in the cylinder, causing a build-up of pressure and resulting in the piston ram rapidly exiting through the top of the cylinder, inflicting fatal injury.

Contributing factors

- The hydraulic cylinder contained hydraulic oil.
- The cylinder was sealed.
- Application of heat to the cylinder.

Action required

1. Do not use any heat-producing equipment such as oxy acetylene/gas torches and angle grinders on sealed hydraulic cylinders.
2. Remove hydraulic oil from the cylinder before heating the cylinder.
3. Make sure the pressure relief valves are fully open and the piston is removed.

Further information

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

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