

**ZHA15-14****Date: 16/03/2015**

# Worker Struck by Damaged Guardrail



## What happened?

- A contractor was in the process of dismantling a section of damaged guardrail. As he separated the guardrail components from the post, a section of damaged rail moved towards the worker's hand and struck him. The sharp corner of the rail pierced deep through his nail and into his thumb.
- The injured person was provided immediate care then taken to a local medical facility for further treatment where he underwent a minor procedure to save the remaining nail and treat the injured thumb. The injured person was given two days off work and is receiving medical treatment.

## Why did it happen?

- The damaged guardrail was significantly twisted and under stress therefore once the two guardrail components were separated the stored energy was released and moved towards the worker dismantling the guardrail.
- A number of factors contributed to the incident including working on a steep embankment and the work was conducted by one person.
- Although an on-site risk assessment and pre-start had been conducted the contract workers did not consider nor identify adequate control measures to manage the risk of workers being struck by stored energy in the twisted and damaged guardrail components as they were dismantled.

## Action required:

- Stored energy hazards need to be eliminated in the first place and if not possible stored energy should be isolated and then released under control. Refer to the Toolbox Topic on Stored Energy (Aug 14).
- Ensure workers are not in the line of fire when stored energy is released.
- Ensure work processes are reviewed and updated and hidden hazards involving stored energy are recognised and control measures implemented.

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Discuss at next available pre-start meeting/post on notice boards – (valid for 3 months)