

Electricity Alliance Central

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ELECTRICITY ALLIANCE CENTRAL SAFETY ALERT - EAC-SA 024

SUBJECT: CEMENTITIOUS DUST ENTERS OPERATIVES EYES

The Event

An operative employed by a fencing installation subcontractor working on an EAC construction site was putting on his overalls in the drying room at the beginning of the morning shift. As he did so some cementitious dust, which had dried on to his overalls from the previous day, became airborne and entered his eyes. As the morning progressed the operative experienced slight swelling around the eye lids and his eyes became increasingly sore and irritated. In an attempt to relieve the symptoms he rinsed his eyes with tap water but remained in discomfort. He then reported to one of the site First Aider's who advised him to attend hospital as a precaution. At the hospital it was determined that the alkaline level on the surface of his eyes was elevated so he was given a number of eye washes to flush out any contaminants. Meanwhile the pH value on his eyes was monitored until normal levels were restored. Cream was applied to his eye lids to reduce the swelling and upon discharge from hospital, he was provided with eye drops for self administration.

He returned to work the following morning (with no lost time) and carried out his normal duties.

NOTE: The operative was very fortunate as cementitious dust in the eyes can cause serious chemical burns due to the alkalinity. Under different circumstances he could have incurred damage that was both permanently debilitating and life changing.

Learning Points

1. It is the Employee's responsibility to ensure that all PPE issued to them is maintained in good order. In the event that PPE becomes contaminated (e.g. by cementitious material, oil, chemical etc), the Employee shall inform their Employer without delay so that replacements can be provided in a timely manner.

2. Disposable overalls must be used for all work with cementitious materials.

Actions

Site Managers shall ensure: (a) this safety alert is briefed out to their respective site teams and (b) that the correct PPE is worn for all work with cementitious materials.

If you require any further information regarding the above please contact the EAC Safety, Health & Security Team or Rupert Ansell on 07730 052 766.

CIRCULATION

ALLIANCE PARTNERS, SITE MANAGEMENT, PROJECT MANAGEMENT, ENGINEERING, PLANNING, CIVILS, CONSTRUCTION, SHESQ
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