

Learning from others:-

**SERIOUS INJURY FROM LIFTING CUSHION USED ON PIPELINE**

**WHAT HAS HAPPENED:**

- A welder working for Gasunie, in the Netherlands, on a 48" gas pipeline broke his hip during a lifting operation using air lifting cushions
- The welder was with a pipe fitter in a safe area with the air compressor adjacent to the cushions
- Two cushions (one on top of another) were inflated to lift the pipe.
- Once inflated, the welder left the safe area to inspect to confirm correct height had been achieved. At that moment, one of the air cushions ejected from underneath the pipeline, hitting the welder and pushing him against the barrier behind him and breaking his hip.



The ejected air cushion besides the pipe section it was supporting

**KEY LEARNING POINTS:**

- There was a lack of restraints for the air cushions to prevent them moving sideways.
- No clear working instructions were available for the use of air lifting cushions.
- The incident was compounded by adverse weather and ground conditions which caused a temporary support to subside into the soil.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED:**

- Project managers shall share the learning of this incident to all staff and contractors who use air cushion lifts.
- Where air cushions are used, risk assessments and method statements should be reviewed to ensure safe use of air cushions and suitable supports are included.