

Safety Alert

Number: 17-08

Published: 26/07/2017

Subject: Personnel Injury Whilst Using Pillar Drill

What Happened / Narrative

An experienced engineer was changing out a drill bit on a tower drill in the engine room workshop and while doing so he inadvertently operated the wrong handle and started the drill.

The engineer was wearing gloves to carry out this task and as the drill turned the glove caught and turned with the drill bit trapping his hand inside and causing a hand injury which then required shore side treatment.

Why Did it Happen / Cause

The subsequent investigation highlighted several safety critical points, a selection of which are noted below:

- The drill had multi-function controls (including, clutch speed, gears, slow and fast operation, on/off switches) none of which were actually marked to indicate their purpose.
- By its design, the emergency stop button for the drill did not clearly identify to the operator when it was engaged or de-activated.
- There was no 'green light' (or similar indicator) to show when the equipment was 'energised'

Any modification of equipment should only be done after consultation and agreement with the manufacturer to ensure the modification does not adversely interfere or affect any of the other functions of the drill.

Corrective Actions Taken by Submitting Company

The company introduced 'drill familiarisation' to the engineers induction and this was a positive step but it is also important that a full and comprehensive risk assessment is carried out for the use of all engine room equipment and that engineers intending to use the equipment are fully familiarised with the RA's and comply with its requirement.

Any equipment which has not been fully risk assessed should be quarantined until safety of the user can be assured.

NOTE: A more recent model of the same drill incorporates a safety feature where the drill cannot be operated if the drill guard is in the open position. This safety feature should be function checked to ensure it is fully operational before carrying out any drill changes.

Photographs / Supporting Information



The information contained within this Safety Alert and the associated MSF web site is provided in good faith for the benefit of our members and does not constitute and is not intended to constitute professional advice or any form of formal representation on behalf of any MSF member or officer. The text as provided by submitting organisations may be amended to ensure that it is brief, informative and readable but will as far as reasonably practicable remain as per the intent of the original submission. For the avoidance of doubt, no liability whatsoever shall be attached to any guidance, recommendation or statement contained therein. Contents should be reviewed individually by recipients who will determine relevance to their own operations.