

Safety Flash – Incident with Recordable/Lost-Time Injury

Incident: GEM ironworkers were working from aerial lifts to install steel reinforcements on columns and rafters. An ironworker, wearing the required PPE, was cutting a piece of steel angle on the ground when a 350-foot section of rail fell 40 feet to the ground from the attachment clips on the active crane runway. He fell backward to the ground, sustaining a head injury. It is not known whether the rail struck him or if he fell as he tried to move out of the way.

Possible contributing factors:

- The clip's open-bottomed design did not prevent the rail from falling through it.
- Welding leads, torch hoses and electric cords on the ground nearby may have contributed to the associate falling if he was trying to get away from the falling rail.
- An overhead crane, operated by a plant worker two days earlier, struck a temporary crane stop about 225 feet away, breaking the stop into pieces, two of which fell to the ground. The damaged crane was taken out of service.
- A crew had previously used a hydraulic hammer to break concrete in the area.
- A lift may have made contact with the rail, displacing it from the clips.
- Welding leads used by a worker in a lift may have become caught on the rail or an open-bottomed clip while the lift was moving.
- The crew did not realize that the workstation location exposed them to falling material.

Primary contributing factors:

- Based on current information, we cannot determine a primary contributing factor at this time.

Solutions:

- During pre-task planning, evaluate the area for potential falling material hazards.
- Provide additional training on the hazards, and safe work practices when using aerial lifts in operating facilities.
- Consider using on-board welders in lifts to avoid leads coming from the ground.
- Verify with the owner that similar ground rail installations have been removed or secured in place in all current and future work areas on site.

Action Items:

- GEM confirmed with the owner that several bays of similar ground rail installation remain and have been secured in place. The remaining sections of rail are scheduled to be removed during an upcoming shutdown.
- Two jobsite stand-downs were held to discuss the incident and overhead hazards.
- A third jobsite stand-down was held to review the possible solutions and action plan.
- During planning, consider the use of on-board welders.
- Upcoming weekly tool box training topics will focus on pre-task planning and safe work practices when using aerial lifts in operating facilities.
- During aerial lift training, reinforce safe work practices in operating facilities.

Keep improving

Your health and safety are the most important part of every project. We need your help to eliminate unsafe behaviors and conditions. If you see a safer and better way to do a task, see your supervisor, or contact GEM Safety: Bill Cornett – 419-720-2728. To get personal protection equipment from the warehouse, call 419-720-2688.