

Safety Flash

Incident with Recordable Injury

Date of Incident: 10/29/18

The Incident

A pipefitter was cleaning a root pass of a socket weld on 2-inch stainless steel piping with a 6-inch angle grinder equipped with a wire brush wheel. He was standing to the right in a good body position, about an arm's distance away from the grinder. He had been making and cleaning welds in the fabrication area since the start of his shift. About 4:00 p.m., the pipefitter felt a stinging, burning sensation on the inside of his left leg. After not finding any noticeable injury, he continued working. At home, he discovered a small red dot and found the skin raised after applying pressure. The next morning, the dot had grown to the size of a quarter. He reported to work and informed the site superintendent. A medical exam confirmed that a piece of wire was embedded about ½-inch deep in his leg. The wheel was correctly rated for rpm. The guard (including the correct depth) and handle were in place.

The Causes

- Optimal angle of grinder as the guard was protecting the upper half of the body.
- The grinding surface was not consistent due to the socket weld root pass fillet and the pipe straight edge.

Prevent It

- Inspect the wheel periodically for irregular, inconsistent wear and/or braids that are splitting/separating from the base of the wheel crimp and consult with the manufacturer.

Action Plan

- Obtain more information from the manufacturer to help prevent future incidents.
- Research and evaluate other manufacturers of wire brush wheels.

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.