



TECH TIPS

Volume 2
February 1996

MAINTENANCE ACCIDENTS

They Can be Reduced by Hazard Awareness and Motivation

Maintenance safety is one of the toughest practices to work on because of the varied situations maintenance personnel face. A plant cannot operate at maximum capacity without quality maintenance performed by professionals. However, the nature of maintenance work makes it a potential source of accidents and injuries.

We need to identify conditions in maintenance and operations which can lead to accidents.

So what is it about these maintenance jobs that can lead to accidents? Firstly, maintenance must be performed in all areas of the plant. This might be at ground level, in confined spaces or high above areas of 'safe footing'. It might be performed under temperature and humidity extremes or even in the wind and rain. Another important factor which may lead to maintenance accidents is that every repair job is classified as 'an emergency' situation or at least one that needs to be completed as soon as possible so that production can be resumed.

All too often, when new equipment is installed, very little thought is given to the design, location and suitable access to enable easy equipment repair or removal. This initially may take more time and be more expensive, but future repairs will be safer, easier and often more economical.

Before repair work is started, we must have an idea of what the job entails. Consider what tools and parts will be needed. Think the job through. If there might be a problem, assume there is and make plans to avoid it. There may not be a second chance. It is also important to plan for the number of people required before beginning because help may not be available once the job is started. If you try to do it alone and help is needed, accidents are likely to occur. If you need to lift an article and it looks awkward or heavy, get help. Even though you may be trying to save time by doing it yourself, you may waste time in the long run if a painful injury occurs.



Many serious maintenance injuries occur when equipment on which someone is working starts up unexpectedly, and the person is caught by the moving parts. Planning for a job must include shutting off and securing the power. You need a good lock and tag procedure to ensure that someone else doesn't come along and turn the power back on.

Protect other workers who may be in the area - know where they are and what they are doing. Make them aware of your presence and of what you are doing. Ensure that each worker has the appropriate personal protective equipment and knows how to use it. This equipment is meant to be used as secondary protection, not as a substitute for safe working practices. Finally, replace all guards on equipment before leaving the job. We are all very well aware of the host of problems and excuses we face when trying to initiate any type of safety but having the right awareness, attitude and approach can go a long way in eliminating maintenance accidents.

.....

If you require further information,
please contact:

Downfields Engineering Pty Ltd
PO Box 6095
TOOWOOMBA WEST QLD 4350
Ph (076) 34 4622 Fax (076) 33 1049

*Disclaimer: Downfields Engineering Pty Ltd accepts no responsibility
for the interpretation or use of this information.*