



Worker fatally injured during plant change process

WorkSafe is investigating an incident in which an employee was fatally injured. He was struck by a section of pipe at a wastewater treatment plant during pipe modification works. Preliminary investigations indicate that immediately prior to the incident, air pressure was introduced to the modified system and a failure occurred. A section of pipe broke free and struck the worker.

Possible contributing factors in incidents of this type

- Hazards relating to modification of the system are not adequately identified
- Thorough risk assessment in relation to the proposed change is not conducted
- System is not constructed to the required standard
- Workers are unaware of the potential hazards of modifying and commissioning the system

Managing hazards and risks

When planning to alter plant, the physical environment or processes at a workplace:

- Clearly define the proposed change
- Identify the hazards and assess the risks
 - Involve competent persons, who have training and experience relevant to the issue, including technical specialists, supervisors, workers and safety and health representatives
 - Identify which existing risks may change, and any new hazards and risks which may be introduced
 - Consider the longer term risks that will result from the change, for example changes required in inspection or maintenance
 - Assess whether the changed workplace remains compliant with laws and standards
- Ensure the change proposal minimises risks as far as practicable
 - Revise the proposal if the risks are elevated - consider a different approach or further controls
- Communicate all changes in relation to risk to affected workers
- Provide any necessary instruction, training or supervision
- Monitor the effectiveness of the controls
- Ensure there is ongoing monitoring to identify gradual changes
- Document changes and make the documents available to workers

The above information is based on WorkSafe's preliminary investigation and further investigation is continuing.

Further information

- The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety. [What is change management and why is it important?](#)

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