

Description of incident:

The Injured Party (IP) was dismantling a handrail with a long reach heavy-duty ratchet spanner.

The scaffold structure had been in position for approximately 2.5 years.

The spanner slipped, which resulted in the IP grazing their arm on the steel beam and impacting their wrist on the instrument tubing and unistrut.

The IP did not initially report to the medic.

After a period of time when the swelling increased, the IP visited the medic who consulted with the onshore medical team. The decision was made for the IP to be subject to medical evacuation (medevac) to enable further assessment at a hospital onshore.

The medevac required the use of a Search & Rescue helicopter given they would have been unable to be evacuated on a scheduled flight as the swelling prevented the donning of a survival suit.

The hospital identified that the IP had sustained a hairline fracture to their wrist.

Findings:

- The root cause was determined to be inadequate spatial awareness, and the chosen tool, in this case a long reach heavy-duty ratchet spanner, slipping off the fitting.
- Initially the IP did not consider the injury to be serious and therefore did not report to the medic. The offshore medic advised that had the injury had been reported earlier they may have been able to reduce the swelling.
- The Toolbox Talk did make mention of the use of 'long handled spanners on solid fittings' even though it was not deemed a long term scaffold. No mention was made on consideration of using powered impact wrenches.
- The work area was tight and restrictive, creating high potential for line of fire hazards. Restricted workspace, low headroom, and potentially tight or seized fittings were noted on the Toolbox Talk form as hazards.
- No mention was made on the consideration of using a lubricant on difficult to remove fittings.

Key Learnings:

- It is recommended that scaffolding structures are always dismantled as soon as practicable. Clients / Duty Holders should consider the impact weather (particularly offshore) can have on degrading the integrity of scaffolding materials, and the increased risks of personal injuries when undertaking deconstruct.
- All personnel to be reminded of the need for prompt reporting of incidents and the need to seek immediate medical attention where any injuries are sustained.
- Highlight the importance of staying focused throughout the entire task.
- Ensure all risks captured as part of toolbox talks and risk assessments are addressed and managed through the appropriate control measures.
- Ensure careful consideration is given to tool selection based on risk, and that the correct tools are available for the job.

