

# WORKSAFE SMART MOVE 2002

## ACTIVITY: HAZARDS, RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL

### Investigating significant incidents

Work in the classroom in small groups or by yourself, under the supervision of your teacher.

#### Resources:

- **Information Sheet**, with full Significant Incident Summary, or look for others on WorkSafe's website at [www.docep.wa.gov.au](http://www.docep.wa.gov.au)

Note: Significant Incident Summaries are real incidents that actually happened in Western Australian workplaces. The incidents have been investigated and a report written by WorkSafe inspectors.

- Information from the General WorkSafe Smart Move module on duties of employers and duties of employees.

#### Task:

- Adopt the role of a WorkSafe inspector.
- Read the details of the two significant incidents on **Worksheet 1 & Worksheet 2**. Work out what you believe were the factors that contributed to each incident.
- In your role of inspector, make some recommendations that you believe would prevent similar accidents occurring. As a guide check the **information Sheet**.
- You can check your answers later with the inspector's findings on WorkSafe's website.

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#### Investigating significant incidents

#### 2/1999 YOUNG WORKER INJURED WHILST PERFORMING HAY BALING OPERATIONS

##### INCIDENT

A 17 year old farm hand only two weeks into his new employment, received a fractured ankle whilst attempting to disengage an industrial rake from a tractor.

The young worker was attempting to uncouple a large 20 wheel industrial rake from a tractor, using a bottle jack on blocks to lift the rake so that the pin could be freed from the draw bar of the tractor. The rake was equipped with a purpose-built jack which was inoperable at the time of the accident.

The work was performed on undulating ground and as a result, the tractor rolled back and knocked the rake off the bottle jack whilst the young farm hand was sitting on the rake. The rake fell onto the farm hand's ankle. The farm hand was not wearing safety footwear.

##### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

1. The employer failed to maintain the proper jacking equipment on the industrial rake and as a result used a bottle jack that was not sufficiently stable for the application.
2. The farm hand was not inducted, nor trained in the safe removal of the industrial rake from the tractor.
3. Lack of adequate supervision for such a new, young worker.
4. The farm hand did not wear safety footwear.

##### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A fully retractable jack (similar to a jockey wheel arrangement seen on caravans) as designed by the manufacturer, should be used to lift industrial rakes on and off tractors.
2. Employers should provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision of young employees to ensure safe operating procedures are established and followed.
3. Employers should ensure employees are provided with and wear adequate personal protective equipment.
4. Accidents that are prescribed in Regulation 2.4 of the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996* must be reported to the WorkSafe Western Australia Commissioner.

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##### Significant Incident Summary 20/1996 – Young worker using an angle grinder

###### Incident

A fourteen-year-old worker was severely injured while operating an angle grinder at a manufacturing workshop in Wangara on his first day at work during November 1995. The youth was in the process of changing the grinding wheel and accidentally activated the on/off switch. Power was still connected to the angle grinder. The rotation of the wheel resulted in severe lacerations to three fingers on his left hand.

The company was fined \$1000 for a breach of section 19(1)(b) of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*.

###### Contributing factors

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###### Recommendations

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### **ACTIVITY: HAZARDS, RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL**

#### **Investigating significant incidents**

##### **Significant Incident Summary 16/1999 – Skylarking burns down factory**

###### **Incident**

A fire that started in the spray booth of a furniture factory completely destroyed the building, valuable stock and the office containing the company records. The fire took place on the 15 February 1999.

The fire was caused by two young workers skylarking (playing around) in the spray booth after they had finished work. A cigarette lighter was used to ignite a stream of highly flammable lacquer from a spray gun, producing a jet of burning liquid. The spray booth caught fire when burning vapours were drawn into the extraction system and ignited the filters. The fire spread rapidly through the building despite the efforts of workers to control it. The entire building was destroyed in about 25 minutes.

The two young workers were aware of the highly flammable nature of lacquers. There were strict rules in place regarding ignition sources in the spray booth. In spite of this they decided to have "a bit of fun". There was no intent to do any harm. They just did not consider the possible consequences.

Although no one was injured in the blaze the fire could have resulted in serious injury or death. The financial cost to the company and workers has been enormous

###### **Contributing factors**

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###### **Recommendations**

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