



Steel Splinters Cause Eye Injuries



▶ INCIDENT

A quarry worker was struck in the eye by steel splinters during maintenance work on a rock crusher. The fragments were surgically removed requiring two operations.

▶ CIRCUMSTANCES

A plant operator was striking a damaged crusher component with a sledgehammer – unaware it was hardened steel. The accident victim was working 3–4 metres away and out of the line of sight of the object being struck.

He was not using eye protection. Steel splinters ricocheted off an inner surface of the crusher assembly and two penetrated his eye.

▶ INVESTIGATION

The main contributing factors were:

- The lack of a proper procedure in place to separate the crusher components; and
- The failure to use eye protection.

There was a requirement for people on this site at risk of eye injury to use eye protection and safety glasses where available. However, there was no clear instruction on where and when to use them.

▶ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clear, specific rules on the use of personal protective equipment must be in place and enforced; and
- Only properly trained people should be authorised to carry out maintenance.

