

## **SAFETY ALERT**

# **Shared Learning's**

### **INCIDENT TITLE:**

**Severed Finger Tip of Wind Contractor**

### **TIME AND DATE OF INCIDENT:**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2018**

### **INCIDENT DETAIL :**

A work party of three (two contractors and a Meridian employee) were tasked to complete a generator bearing replacement as part of planned maintenance work at the Te Apiti remedial project. During the task they had to remove a guard to the high-speed brake disc to access the front generator bearing. The team ran out of acetylene before commencing the task after completing the rear bearing. This unplanned event put self-directed pressure on the team to return to the workshop to ensure the gas bottle could be taken to Palmerston North for swapping before work started the next day. With team agreement the brake was released, putting the turbine into idle mode. The unguarded high-speed brake disc started to rotate. A contractor who was cleaning up in very close proximity to the brake disc stood up and while attempting to turn around a gust of wind rocked the turbine forcing him to sway and slip on the floor and while reaching out to brace himself he made contact with the unguarded rotating disc. This resulted in his index finger of his left-hand protruding through one of two 38mm locking pin holes. As his finger went into this hole and protruded through to the other side it came in contact with a fixed galvanized steel retaining bracket which removed the tip of the contractor's finger.

### **INITIAL RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION OUTCOMES :**

First aid was applied at the scene and the contractor was taken to hospital where it was confirmed overnight the finger-tip could not be reattached

The contractor lost his left-hand index finger between the 1st and 2nd joint.

The accident scene was frozen, and Worksafe NZ were notified.

### **LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INCIDENT:**

This accident is still under full investigation.

The initial learnings and key messages are as follows:

- Never underestimate unguarded plant or machinery. It can seriously harm you quickly and cause serious injury or fatalities.
- Until further notice no test start of turbines will occur with people in the nacelle or yaw deck at Te Apiti wind farm without authorisation from Senior Management.
- Never remove a guard unless it is completely necessary to carry out the task and always ensure the machine is locked out before doing so.
- Always replace all guards before you free wheel/run the machine. If this is not practicable, authorisation from Senior Management must be obtained.
- Senior Management must ensure a thorough risk assessment has been completed and approved before authorising.

### **PHOTO:**



The Corporate Safety and Health Team are currently working on systems to support the above learnings.

If interested in viewing the full investigation report for this incident, it can be found in:

Contact Bobby Ball on 027 706 6308



meridian