

Uncontrolled Pipe Movement

What Happened:

During the annual shut two separate contractors were working on the OEC -3 brine outlet pipe (middle pipe in picture). One contractor disconnected the lower heat source control valve and supported it with scaffolding to stop the pipe tilting to “the right” and moved onto the next OEC unit.

The upper C end cap was then removed by a second contractor, leaving both ends of the pipe unsecured.

Unbeknown to both contractors the 10 tonne piping then tilted slowly to “the left”, coming to lean against the outside piping, which prevented it from falling to the ground. This also occurred at the OEC-2 site.

Geothermal station

What did we learn?

- When planning ensure you involve all other parties whose work may be adjacent to yours.
- When carrying out the work ensure good communication between adjacent work parties.
- Both ends of the piping had not been removed at the same time before. It was not expected the pipe would “lean” the way it did, as it was scaffolded at the bottom prior to start of work to prevent movement, however the piping tilted to the other side different from what was identified.
- Flange bolts were used to secure the remaining brine outlet pipes and supported with strops prior to commencing further work

