

Safety Alert

Look Out when using Lifting Eyes

What happened?

Manawa Energy (or contractors) has had three incidents this year, involving lifting eyes on heavy equipment. In one incident, the weld gave way resulting in the contractor being struck by the come-alongs, which caused an LTI. The lifting eye was being used to pull the load horizontally, which is not its intended use.

Another incident occurred when a 16mm lifting eye was used in an 18mm tapped hole when placing an inlet valve in position. This resulted in the eye pulling out. The eye was for levelling the valve and did not result in the load being dropped. Standard lifting eye gauges in NZ are 16mm and 20mm, so the 18mm tap was unexpected.

In a Near Miss incident, contractors were unpacking a new neutral earthing resistor (NER). While unpacking and testing they needed to remove a cover from the NER. As part of that removal process, they had to undo 2 lifting eyes. When they did this, they realised that an imperial eye had been installed into a metric threaded hole. They advise the PM and project engineer and then replaced the imperial eye with the correct size metric eye. Due to the manner in which the NER had been shipped and packaged no attempt had been made to use the lifting eyes prior to this being noticed.



What did we learn?

- Lifting eyes can cause serious damage or injury if they give way, it is important that they are in good condition and fitted appropriately. If possible, sling loads rather than use lifting eyes.

Bullet point lessons

- Remember that lifting eyes are a link in the chain and need to be inspected to ensure they are free from defects like cracks or metal fatigue.
- Lifting eyes should not be used for heavy loads; it is better to sling loads if possible.
- Ensure you are not standing in between the load and a crush point and that you have plenty of room to extract yourself should there be a failure.
- Check the design specifications of plant and equipment that specifies the use of lifting eyes.
- Always ensure the correct size eye is fitted. This is especially important if the equipment is manufactured overseas either in, or intended for import to, a country that uses imperial.
- Always check - Don't assume the right eye is in place, if you haven't put it there yourself.