

Context:

A subcontractor demolition crew was tasked with the removal of Theatre seating in the Capitol Theatre as a part of the demolition works.

The work group consistent of two crews.

- Crew one, were to free the seating from the floor, this involved cutting an isolated electrical cable which fed the chair lights with a cable cutter.
- Crew two, a single worker, the injured person (IP), was tasked with breaking down the seating into smaller sections.

On occasions crew one did not cut the electrical cable as required, meaning the IP would need to cut the cable in order to continue the task. As there were an insufficient number of cable cutters available, initially the IP would borrow the cable cutters from crew one, who were working further up the Theatre. In order to speed up the process, the IP began to use a fixed blade knife to cut the electrical cable.

At approximately 1500hrs after successfully cutting the electrical cable with a fixed blade knife 4 to 5 times, the IP was cutting a cable when the blade made contact with the IP left inner forearm resulting in a deep laceration.

Investigation findings

- The work group had received a briefing from an electrician on where to cut the electrical cables
- The use of a knife for the task was not risk assessed
- Neither the Principal Contractor or the subcontractor had a policy on the use on knives
- The IP used an alternate tool for the task in order to speed up the process
- The IP had not received training in the correct use of knives
- The Supervisor advised that they were unaware that the IP was using a knife to cut the electrical cable
- There were two 1000v snips available, but these had been allocated to crew one



What are the significant learning

- Fixed blade knives are inherently dangerous as the blade is always exposed
- When a bladed tool is required to be used, the hierarchy of control should be applied to the selection of the tool for the task
 1. **Eliminate** Consider alternative method to complete task
 2. **Substitute** Consider alternative Tool For the task e.g.
 3. **Isolate** Snips Concealed bladed knives
 4. **Engineering** Manual-retracting or self-retracting bladed knives
 5. **Administration** Provide training for tools being used, SWMS
 6. **PPE** Kevlar Cut 5 Resistance Gloves and Arm Guard
- Contractors need to provide adequate supervision of all work crews
- Always used the most appropriate tool for the task
- It is important that all workers have easy access to tools required for a task. The sharing of tools between work groups can lead to workers taking short cuts and using alternative unsafe methods to complete a task

Snips available for task



Kevlar Cut 5 Resistance Gloves and Arm Guard

Who Needs to Know

All Property Services Vendors
All Property Services Personnel