



Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

ALERT 01-46

AIR POWERED IMPACT WRENCH INCIDENT

WHAT HAPPENED:

An employee had his leg lacerated when he inadvertently activated an air-powered impact wrench that he was holding between his legs. The socket on the impact wrench had a nail protruding from the retainer slot and he was positioning the wrench so he could bend the nail over.

WHAT CAUSED IT:

The employee decided to place a nail in the slot through the socket that is provided for a socket retainer. In order to effectively use the socket he had to bend the nail over, and used his legs to hold the wrench. The use of the impact wrench was not indicated in the JSA and no adjustment was made for the job, the failure to de-energize the wrench and the modification of equipment for convenience were the causes of this event.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS: To address this incident, this company did the following:

- Instructed employees to use the one and two piece socket retainers that are purpose-built for this application. These socket retainers are available from a number of manufacturers.
- Instructed supervisors to ensure that the employees have the proper tools and are experienced in their appropriate use.
- Instructed employees that if the proper mechanisms for tools are not at hand or are missing, the employees are to contact their supervisor to either find the right equipment or postpone the job until the proper equipment can be ordered and obtained.
- In addition, employees were instructed to disconnect the energy source from power tools before making ANY adjustments, including installing any sort of retainer on the socket.

The Corrective Actions stated in this alert are one company's attempts to address the incident, and do not necessarily reflect the position of IADC or the IADC HSE Committee.