

SHEQ Lessons learned: Foot fracture during operation of cable percussion rig

Type of incident

Injury incident: fracture

Location of incident

Fratton, United Kingdom

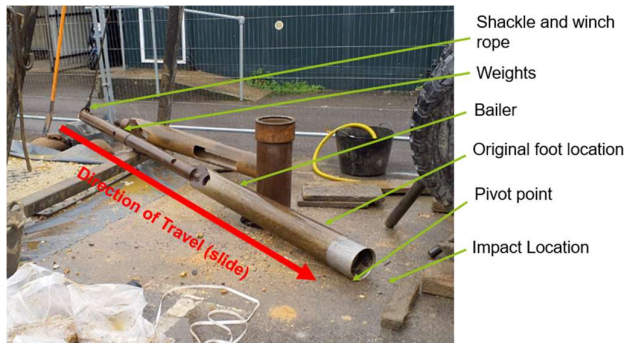
Date/time

21 November 2024

Brief account of incident

Drilling was being undertaken using a cable percussion rig. Snow was falling heavily and the snow was melting when it hit the ground. The assistant driller (the injured person (IP)) had emptied the bailer and the drill team was returning the drill tool to the hole.

As the lead driller operated the winch, the assistant driller used their foot to stabilise the drill tool as it pivoted upright. During this process, the IP's foot slipped off the bailer, causing it to move in an uncontrolled manner, resulting in the bailer sliding and striking the IP's foot.



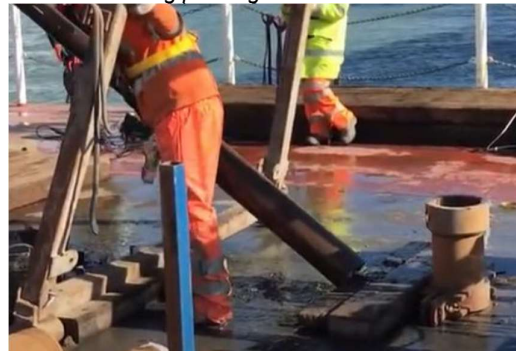
What went right?

- The drillers were wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
- The drillers held the appropriate training qualifications to undertake the work.
- The IP stopped work and sought assistance.

What went wrong?

- The wet surface combined with the drilling arisings increased the likelihood of slipping.
- A point-of-work risk assessment was not completed when the circumstances of the work changed, i.e., heavy snowfall.
- The risk assessment and method statement had not identified the significant risk of tools slipping and therefore controls for this had not been specified. The risk was known by the drilling team and accepted.
- The British Drilling Association Guidance (BDA) says, "It can be acceptable for the Support Operative to use their boot to support the shell while it is carefully slid across the ground until it is firmly on the matting or timber". No matting or timber was used and the guidance had not been briefed, despite being referenced in the risk assessment and method statement.

The below image is representative of timbers in use during pivoting of the drill tool.



Lessons learned

Always stop work and update the point-of-work risk assessment when circumstances change.

Risk assessments must consider the risk of tools slipping and safe systems of work must be specific, adhering to published standards.

Where industry-specific best practice/standards are referenced in method statements, these (alongside the method statements) must be briefed regularly to site teams.