Safety Alert

Date: 14th November 2012
Division: WA & NT
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Subject: Finger Caught Between Sledge Hammer and Steel Structure

Event
A workshop employee was involved in a routine task that required the fitting of a pin into a new A Frame Bush. The process required the use of a sledge hammer to move the pin into its correct position.

After completing 3 – 4 successful hits with the sledge hammer with the pin nearly home, the fitter misjudged one of the hits, resulting in the sledge hammer skewing from the head of the pin and coming into contact with the structure of the trailer. At the same time, his left index finger pinched between the handle of the hammer and the head of the pin.

Outcome
Broken tip of finger, superficial cuts and bruising.

Root causes
Outcome of investigation still pending.

Recommendation to enhance safety
– All sites to ensure that risk assessments identify potential crush injuries when using tools similar to sledge hammers
– Review current work practises with a mindset to remove or reduce hammering activities with alternative methods.
– Reiterate to workforce the need to review work practises (especially routine tasks) with a view to identify “sleepers”, risks that are there waiting for the line of defence to fail.

Key learning
Although the wearing of gloves did not prevent the incident, it most certainly reduced the seriousness of the injuries sustained.
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Photos of re-enactment of task being performed

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