



Safety Alert

Amputation of Top of Thumb

28th January 2020

The following pages of this safety alert were issued by Highways England's supply chain partner:

Aecom working on Lower Thames Crossing

Safety Bulletin / Alert

Amputation of Top of Thumb

Incident Overview

On the 15th January 2020 at approximately 23:50 hrs, while the Lower Thames Crossing GI team at Package E were working on a Jack up Barge over water on the River Thames, the assistant driller was deploying the Geobor barrel into the casing. As the barrel descended the assistant driller's thumb was caught between the latch ring and the casing, resulting in the amputation of the thumb around the first knuckle.

Operation / Process

In order to deploy the Geobor barrel, the barrel was lifted and then lowered into the casing using the winch and overshot. The barrel was then released by the assistant driller by depressing the latch release keys by hand. During this process the lay key was not used to secure the barrel in place while the latches were depressed, locking out movement of the barrel. This together with a lapse in concentration during this repetitive task resulted in the second man placing thumb between the latch ring and casing which resulted in the injury being sustained.

Going Forward (All Packages)

The method used to deploy the Geobore barrel is to be immediately reviewed across all Package RAMS documents. Only one method of operation will be acceptable on the LTC project for this procedure. This will involve using the lay key to secure the Geobore barrel while the release pins are depressed.

The method for depressing the latches must be by the use of wire rope (or other device which eliminates the need to place hands on the barrel and has been approved by AECOM SHE Team), wrapping it around the barrel to avoid the need to have the operators' hands on the barrel. Once the wire rope has been used to depress the latches, the rope is to be removed, placed in a safe location and the lay key then removed.

This method removes the direct interaction of the assistant driller's hands with the core barrel when releasing from the overshot and therefore removes the risk of entrapment of hands or fingers. The lay key acts to ensure that the weight of the barrel is supported, and the barrel can't drop down inside the casing until the key is removed keeping hands away from any moving parts.

The operational RAMS documents must be updated to clearly set out the steps required and re-signed by all drilling teams.

The "Safe Hands" campaign must be continued across all Packages of the LTC project. Any suggestions for further improving safe working methods must be shared across all Packages to ensure that, as a Project, we are all working to raise the bar in terms of safety.

Safe Behaviour = Safe Performance

Contact your SHE Manager with questions or comments on this Safety Alert / Bulletin

Photo 1 – demonstration of assumed position of thumb at time of incident



Photo 2 – use of lay key and wire rope to release latches.

