



HAZARD ALERT

Pressure Washer Incident

Location: Vanderhoof, BC

Date of Incident: April 27, 2017

Details of Incident: While a worker was using a hot water pressure washer, a co-worker needed a bucket of hot water. The person using the pressure washer went to remove the pressure nozzle to fill the bucket and inadvertently triggered the wand, sending pressurized hot water out of the nozzle.

He was immediately taken to the hospital for assessment and treatment. The worker had a small cut near his ring finger.

High pressure washing equipment can present a variety of hazards to workers. Understanding the hazards is the first step in reducing workers' exposure. These hazards include:

WATER JETS - exposure to the high pressure water jet has the greatest potential to cause serious injury. The water jet can travel at speeds up to 3,300km per hour, and can slice through solid materials or damage any part of the human body. Even injuries that appear to be relatively minor can be fatal, as microorganisms can be injected into the body through the injury site along with air, water and debris.

HIGH VELOCITY IMPACT - Debris propelled by waterjets can injure eyes, skin, and body parts upon impact.

CHEMICAL EXPOSURE - Contact with hazardous chemicals is a risk while pressure washing.

MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURY - Workers are often required to work in awkward positions, lift heavy tools or materials and work with high reaction force. Workplace conditions are often wet, and increased slip hazards present themselves.

Recommended Preventative Actions: Ensure workers are trained in the safe operation of pressure washers and understand all of the risks associated with their use, including depressurizing the unit prior to changing nozzles, wearing the necessary PPE including appropriate gloves to prevent scalding from hot water and to reduce risk of skin penetration from highly pressurized water.

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