MinEx
Health and Safety in NZ extractives

NZ Safety Alert

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe

October 2019

Damage to diesel fuel nozzle

A truck driver was refueling his truck with diesel when he left the stationed area and moved to the other side of the truck to refill the ad blue admixture. The driver was distracted and did not return to the diesel side of the truck. He proceeded to drive away from the refueling area, pulling the head of the nozzle off and lodging the handpiece in the fuel tank.

The driver left the yard and travelled around 5km before he realised what he had done and he quickly notified someone at the yard to see if he had caused more damage.

The yard fuel tank had been fitted with auto shut off values on the hose to ensure if this did happen, the hose would not spill any fuel. The fuel tanker was then locked out and scheduled for repair the following day.

While diesel is not a particularly flammable substance, it is an environmental hazard with considerable clean-up costs if it should leak into a drain, watercourse or the soil. Diesel is a hazardous substance and two grades of diesel fuel are approved for use in New Zealand:

- automotive gas oil and marine diesel
- low flash point diesel

For simplicity, both are treated as flammable liquids, low hazard.

You need to ensure that:

1. Where possible, auto shut off valves are installed on all refueling hoses.
2. Operators are trained and assessed as competent to operate mobile equipment. This needs to include model/equipment specific training and assessment.
3. Refueling procedures are clear and concise and require one job to be completed at a time when refueling.
4. Sufficient time is allowed for refueling to avoid rushing to get multiple jobs done.
5. All refueling is done in designated areas to reduce the risk of spillage and slip hazards.

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 24 months to June 2019 show 4% of all incidents (71 Incidents) result from environmental incidents with the potential for harm.

Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.