

# Worker's thumb severed during winching operation

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## What happened?

During a rigging up operation on a coal seam gas lease, a skid holding a shipping container had been unloaded from the back of a truck using a truck mounted winch. While trying to realign the skid, a spotter and another worker (the injured person) were pulling and pushing the sling respectively, while the winch was being operated. The injured person's right thumb was severed when his glove became lodged between the winch line and the barrel at the rear of the truck.

## How did it happen?

## Comments

## Key issues

- Standard operating procedures (SOP's) existed for loading and unloading skids, however there was no SOP for
- realigning the skid.

The SOP for loading and unloading the skid included the implementation of an exclusion zone to prohibit workers from being in near proximity to the winch, line while the winch was being operated. Both the injured person and the spotter

- where within the designated exclusion zone at the time of the incident.
- In the absence of an SOP, no formal risk assessment, such as a JSA, was initiated for this process.
- P&G Inspectorate key issues:
  - Do skids need to be realigned?
  - If operators and or contractors are seeking to realign skids, are risks being safely managed?

The P&G Inspectorate is concerned for worker safety if personnel are placing hands, fingers on live winch cable at any

- time, but particularly for the purposes of aligning a row of skids.

## Recommendations

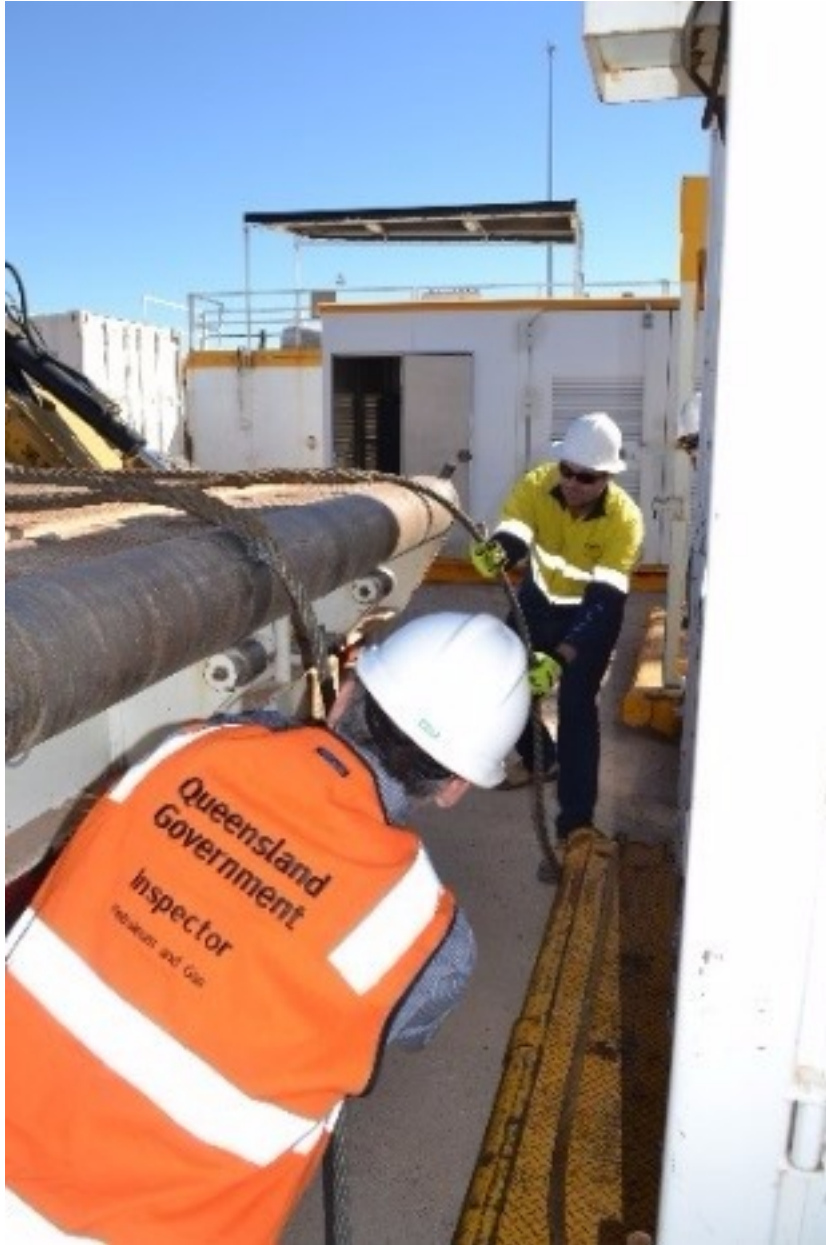
Operators/site safety managers should consider:

1. Controls are used to ensure risks are as low as reasonable practicable.
2. SOPs or risk assessments (JSA's etc) are completed and/or updated for all stages of the rigging up process.
3. Personnel are familiar with, and have a working knowledge, of all relevant risk assessments and SOPs.
4. Workers (including contractors) risk assess a task if an existing SOP does not adequately cover additional risks associated with the operation.
5. Undertaking risk assessment to determine the effect of specific tasks (i.e. minor realignment) on safe operations.

## References and further information

The Petroleum and Gas Inspectorate will be **focusing future inspection efforts** on drilling operating plant to include the management of skids and truck winch operations. The Inspectorate will identify and publish material of **successes and positive observations** related to the safety risk management of skids, shipping containers in these operating plant scenarios.

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Issued by the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines

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