

# SAFETY ALERT

<b>INCIDENT</b>	Uncontrolled release of bitumen from Gantry Hose
<b>SUBJECT</b>	A0/P3 Bitumen Discharge
<b>INCIDENT DATE</b>	23/02/2021
<b>BUSINESS UNIT</b>	Higgins Contractors - Auckland
<b>RADAR NUMBER</b>	INCID-0042792

## WHAT HAPPENED?

A Higgins bitumen sprayer was positioned under the plant gantry hose in preparation to transfer bitumen. The Sprayer Operator advised the asphalt plant operator of the bitumen quantity required. The asphalt plant operator then proceeded to turn the tank valve on from the control room. At approximately 10.15am after turning the valve on, bitumen started flowing out of the gantry line onto the bitumen sprayer and surrounding surfaced area. The Sprayer Operator was standing approximately 10m away from the bitumen sprayer, then started yelling out to the asphalt plant operator to stop the pump from the control room.

The asphalt plant operator then sprayed water onto the tanker and surrounding area to solidify the bitumen. Absorbent socks were then placed around the surround cesspits. Pap material was also placed in front of the bitumen to help contain in this area.

The bitumen sprayer driver was wearing appropriate PPE for working with bitumen. No workers were in the vicinity at the time.

The Electrician who subcontracts to the Asphalt Plant was called out to inspect the bitumen gantry for any faults. It was discovered that a metal lever was placed on the foot pedal (dead man switch) to simulate a person pushing down the pedal with their foot. It is unknown at the time, how long the lever was left on the pedal.



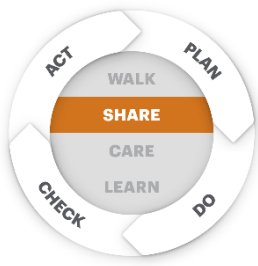
Lever used as weight on deadman switch



Sprayer Tanker Back Window



Bitumen Spill – Oily run off



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## INTERIM CONTROLS IMPLEMENTED TO PREVENT REOCCURRENCE

- A new key switch was installed at the top of the gantry, so when the bitumen transfer is finished the key is turned off and returned to the plant. (Note the key can only be removed when in the off position).
- Register created at the plant for sprayer operators to sign into before and after loading bitumen.
- Work instruction on process to follow was created.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR ALL OF US (pre-investigation)

### Enter key theme of initial learning here

- When working with bitumen, ensure the appropriate PPE is worn (Protective Headgear with heat resistant material covering head and neck, Face Shield, Ankle to Wrist Hi-Vis 300gsm fire retardant overalls, Full heat resistant gauntlet type gloves and safety boots.
- Follow Standard Operating Procedures provided and don't take short cuts.
- The standard procedure is to cool and solidify the bitumen by spraying water on it.
- Protect cesspits using oil absorbent socks and scatter pap around the spill.
- Asphalt Plant Operator and Sprayer Operator to sign in/out the key required to switch on/off the valve, the switch is turned off and nothing left on the dead man switch (pedal).
- Sprayer Operator to stand on the dead man switch. Do not use any other foreign objects to do this.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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