

NZ Safety Alert

19 February 2021

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

Uncontrolled stored energy release

Two contractors asked to remove a compressor from a delivery pallet, noticed that a 100ml air line was attached to the compressor and connected to the site's air system.

Having identified the potential for air pressure in the line, they isolated the valve on the air system and opened the valve located on the compressor. No air was released, and the contractors began disconnecting the air line from the compressor.

As the connector reached the release point, the hose released suddenly forcing it down past the head of the contractor working from the ground.

The resulting air blast blew the contractors helmet and glasses off with the helmet landing approximately 25 metres away and the glasses landing on top of the compressor housing.



You need to ensure that:

1. All pressure is released prior to working on any pressurised equipment. Checks should be done to ensure no pressure exists in any line or vessel.
2. You check all pressure vessels, including compressors, have end user pressure relief valves fitted.
3. Relief valves are fitted to any permanent fixed compressors if no other way is identified for relieving pressure from attached systems.

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 39 months to Sept 2020 show 6% of all incidents (189 incidents) result from pressure release, of which 2% (57 incidents) involve hydraulic pressure.

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