

HEALTH & SAFETY ALERT

Steel Shrapnel Injures Worker When Repairing Tracks

INCIDENT:

This piece of steel shrapnel hit a worker in the upper thigh, narrowly missing the femoral artery, resulting in hospitalization and surgery to repair the damage and remove the shrapnel.



HAZARD:

The worker was replacing a track link on an excavator and used a sledge hammer to hit the pin. A shard chipped off the pin shown in the picture on the right. When hardened steel is struck with another steel tool there is always a potential for the steel to shatter. Once a piece of steel shatters the result is left to chance. The steel fragments are like bullets and result in potentially fatal injuries similar to gunshot wounds.



You could easily be hit in the eye, the groin or the hand by steel shrapnel.

SOLUTIONS:

To avoid steel on steel hammering:

- ❑ Use a different tool (portable hydraulic track press)
- ❑ Use a softer sledge (copper, brass, composite materials)
- ❑ Use a drift¹ made of a softer metal between the pieces of steel
- ❑ Grind any splayed areas of chisels, wedges, etc.
- ❑ Discard pins, etc that show signs of previous chipping – this may indicate poor steel quality



Always eye protection, gloves & long sleeves

¹ a drift is a round pointed piece of steel used for enlarging holes in metal or to bring holes in line