



READYPOWER

ENGINEERING LTD

NUMBER ONE FOR PLANT HIRE
OPERATED AND SELF DRIVE HIRE

To: All workshop Staff, all depots

Date: 12th May 2006

SAFETY BRIEFING

Lessons Learnt – Battery Charging and Sources of Ignition

A recent incident occurred where an angle grinder was being used immediately adjacent to a battery charging area where a lead-acid type battery was on charge.

The sparks being projected towards the area where the battery was located came into contact with the Hydrogen gas being given off as a result of the charging process. The resultant explosion blew the battery apart and sent fragments of the plastic casing and the battery across and wide area where employees were standing. The blast was so strong that part of the casing hit the workshop ceiling approximately 25ft above.

In this instance we were lucky that no employee suffered any injury but the potential for acid, a piece of battery casing or part of the battery's internals to hit, burn or injure someone was very high.

This incident highlights the following:

1. Conduct all operations that may give rise to a source of ignition or any hot work to be carried out well away from any areas where batteries may be on charge.
2. Ensure that the area where batteries are being charged is well ventilated and prevents the build up of hydrogen gas occurring.
3. Ensure that you have fire fighting equipment close to the battery charging bay
4. Ensure you have eyewash or cold running water present near to the battery charging bay

Your areas where this operation takes place must conform to the above requirements AS A MINIMUM, and will be checked during depot inspections by the local Depot Manager.

Andy Young
SHEQ Director