

# Health and Safety Hazard Alert

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## Hand-held Angle Grinders



### 1 WHAT ARE ANGLE GRINDERS USED FOR?

Angle grinders can be used for several functions including sanding, grinding and cutting processes, depending on the type of disc used.

### 2 WHAT IS THE HAZARD?

When operating, the cutting or grinding disc may come into contact with a body part, or shatter and throw off pieces at extremely high speed.

### 3 WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

An operator could easily sustain cuts, abrasions, burns or eye injury. There have been reported workplace fatalities in Queensland as a result of grinder discs shattering.

### 4 HOW WAS THE HAZARD IDENTIFIED?

A schools officer was fatally injured while operating an angle grinder, when the disc shattered.

### 5 WHAT ARE THE CONTROLS?

- Student Supervision:** Teaching staff should follow processes detailed in the Department of Education CARA procedure.
- Disc Selection:** The disc must be suitable for the material (e.g. steel, masonry), the correct size for the grinder (this includes centre hole size), and capable of being used at the maximum r.p.m. of the grinder. If any doubt exists, the disc should not be attached to the grinder. Cutting discs should never be used for grinding and vice versa.
- Operation:** Newly mounted discs should run free for one minute before cutting or grinding.
  - Never apply pressure to stop a disc spinning.
  - The work item should be rigidly supported.
  - Eye/face and hearing protection appropriate to the task must be worn.
  - Flange and flange nuts must suit the disc and be in good condition.
  - Discs should be stored and handled carefully to avoid damage.
- Principals/Managers:** Should ensure the safe use of hand-held grinders in accordance with this Hazard Alert and other supporting documentation.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)

This hazard alert and others are available at the 'Creating Healthier Workplaces' website.