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What happened?

We have had two recent BOB's submitted where our people have visited site with experienced contractor colleagues, and during the visit the work activities have been extended outside of the original intentions and scope of work.

Any deviation from a pre-planned way of working has the potential to expose individuals to additional hazards and risks, and may result in inadequate control measures being implemented, therefore putting people in danger.

One incident involved the entry in to an outfall pipe without consideration as to whether this was a confined space requiring additional checks and controls.

The most recent incident occurred when an empty open topped sludge tank was being measured with a surveyor's staff. The person with the staff then decided, outside of the intended activity, to use the staff to measure an adjacent tank with sludge in it. When they closed the telescopic sections of the staff, sludge had entered the casing and was squirted over the person. Although not life threatening, it wasn't a nice experience and sludge does have health implications if ingested.

What do we need to do?

There are a number of key areas that our responsible managers and personnel visiting site need to consider:

Site visit scope – Ensure the planned activity has been sufficiently planned and a suitable and sufficient risk assessment (HSF 020.01) has been produced. Responsible managers must ensure the risk assessment has been briefed to the site workers.

The site workers must complete a 'Point of work risk assessment' (HSF 020.02) before starting work to verify everything is as per the risk assessment.

Change – Change can catch us all out and is one of the most common causes of incidents occurring. If something changes on site and it is outside the risk assessment or work brief, stop and take the time to review. Sometimes this may mean cancelling the work, or it may be a call to the responsible manager to check that they are happy for you to continue, together with any additional control measures.

Experience and confidence – A common theme with the two BOB's was that the situations involved one of our people going to site with a more experienced and confident construction staff member. This can make it difficult for our lesser experienced or junior staff to have the confidence to question and challenge others. In these cases the responsible manager needs to be clear in the risk assessment and briefing with their people the importance and need to stick to the scope, and to escalate any potential changes, issues or concerns to them before progressing with the task. It is important that all people carrying out work on behalf of MWH are empowered to stop work at any time if they consider it is unplanned or has the potential to cause harm to themselves or others.

Summary

The reporting of these BOB's demonstrates a proactive approach and excellent behaviours by the individuals involved. This has enabled us to share this key learning across the business and we acknowledge and thank them for supporting BOB and helping us improve our health, safety and wellbeing

If you are visiting site, and see or are involved in any activity that looks like it has the potential to harm you or others in proximity, then stop and talk to your manager.

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