

## WHAT HAPPENED?

A worker was lifting a vehicle on a hoist in a service shop when he noticed a pinhole leak in a hydraulic line. He attempted to cover the leak with his finger which resulted in hydraulic fluid being injected into his finger and out his fingernail on the other side.

The employer called the emergency room and later sent in a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for hydraulic fluid.

## WHAT DID/COULD HAVE WENT WRONG?

The worker was assessed by a Doctor at the hospital, bandaged up and sent home. The next day the worker noted his finger was red and looked infected. He went back to the hospital where the Doctor gave him antibiotics and sent him home once again. A few days later the finger looked worse and the worker was in considerable pain. He went back to the hospital and was told the finger would have to be amputated due to poisoning by the hydraulic fluid.

The incident resulted in a permanent injury and lengthy time loss claim and costs with the WCB.



## KEY LESSON FROM INCIDENT

**Lack of Hazard Assessment** – A Hazard Assessment to identify hazards and controls was not performed.

**Lack of Training** – Worker had not been trained to perform maintenance/inspection on a vehicle lift, the dangers of a hydraulic leak, or emergency first aid procedures. (Do not use your hands to search for leaks. Check for leaks by passing a piece of cardboard or wood over the suspected area)

**Inadequate Emergency Procedures** – The Emergency plan should have had detailed procedures to follow in a medical emergency. The Employer had the right idea in sending the SDS to the hospital, but sending it with the worker would have been a better option.

**Know Your Responsibilities** – Supervisors should be trained on their responsibilities and roles as they pertain to safety. Workers should be trained on safe use of equipment and, should know their responsibility to report unsafe working conditions or equipment in need of service.

**Assess Risks** – This is critical when working with high hazard equipment such as vehicle lifts.

**Establish Expectations** – Train and educate workers on the limitations of equipment, conditions of safe use, and on established rules. (i.e. lift safety requirements)