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Sent: 18 September 2020 17:20
To: nss iric <nss.iric@nhs.scot>
Subject: Information Message IM/2020/025 - HSE Health and Safety Bulletin - Failure to detect dangerous gas/vapour due to incorrect specification of sample tube

IRIC Incident Reporting &
Investigation Centre

Reference: IM/2020/025
Subject: HSE Health and Safety Bulletin - Failure to detect dangerous gas/vapour due to incorrect specification of sample tube

This information message is sent to draw the attention of Equipment Co-ordinators to information which may be relevant to the safety of equipment and facilities in NHS Boards and Local Authorities. Please find the information below:

HSE Health and Safety Bulletin CEMHD1-2020, 10 Sept 2020, Failure to detect dangerous gas/vapour due to incorrect specification of sample tube

HSE has issued an alert which highlights the potential for misleading gas detection readings when using sampling tubes with pumped gas detectors. Sampling tubes are sometimes used to extend the reach of the detection device. They can also be used to allow detection at an increased distance from the user.

In a recent incident a gas detector failed to detect the presence of a flammable vapour. Hot work proceeded in the incorrect belief that there was no inflammable vapour present. The subsequent explosion resulted in a fatal injury.

The investigation into this accident found that it was caused by failure to detect the flammable vapour due to the vapour being adsorbed on the inner surface of the sample tube. This meant no flammable vapour reached the detector before the test was completed resulting in an incorrect belief that the work area was free of flammable vapour.

HSE is keen to use this incident to highlight the:

- risk of adsorption if an unsuitable sample tube is used.
- importance of selecting the correct systems for gas detection
- importance of verifying the effectiveness of the detection system.

More detail about the safety bulletin is available on the [HSE website here](#)

As the Equipment Co-ordinator for your organisation, we recommend that you assess whether or not to forward this information to managers and staff within your area of responsibility who might benefit from being aware of it.

If you received this message directly from IRIC, email us at nss.iric@nhs.scot or phone 0131 275 7575 quoting the IM reference number. Alternatively, if you have received this message from someone in your own organisation, please direct all enquiries to them and they will liaise with IRIC as required.

Incident Reporting & Investigation Centre (IRIC)
Health Facilities Scotland
NHS National Services Scotland

Contact us:

IRIC Email nss.irc@nhs.scot
Helpline 0131 275 7575

<https://www.nss.nhs.scot/health-facilities/incidents-and-alerts/report-an-incident/>

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