

## INCIDENT TYPE:

## HIGH PRESSURE JETTER INCIDENT



An incident occurred recently where an operative was seriously injured while carrying out a pressure jetting task. Three operatives were attempting to clear a blockage in the macerator overflow chamber at the inlet works. After attempting and failing to clear the blockage using hand tools, they used a pressure jetter, and inserted the hose into the overflow chamber. When the pressure was applied, the end of the hose lifted in an uncontrolled fashion due to the water pressure and the water jet struck one of the Operatives across his neck, causing a serious laceration and hospitalisation of the employee. This task could have resulted in a fatality and has highlighted that the correct procedures were not being followed.

High pressure jetters are used for many different tasks in the water industry from washing of vehicles to the clearing of sewers and the use of this equipment is strictly controlled. The operating pressures of the equipment involved in these types of operations range from around 6 BAR (87 psi) to 1700 BAR (24700 psi) and in accordance with Water Jetting Association are classed as high pressure and anything above 1700 BAR as Ultra High Pressure.

The mobile jetter unit involved in this incident operated at 270 BAR (3920 psi) and as it takes only 7 BAR (102 psi) for water pressure to penetrate the skin the potential for a serious accident is extremely high unless all control measures are strictly adhered to.



High Pressure Mobile Jetting Unit similar to the one involved in the incident

It is therefore essential that managers and employees follow the guidance below:

- No employee must use high pressure water jetting equipment unless they have been fully trained in accordance with the type of equipment they are using e.g. for sewer jetting, in accordance with the Water Jetting Associations Code of Practice.
- Water jetting equipment must be securely stored when it is not in use so that only authorised personnel can access it.
- A risk assessment is carried out prior to any work of this nature being carried out.
- The correct PPE is worn at all times.

Scottish Waters Organisational Development can provide information on appropriate training courses that are available.

If you need any further advice or assistance please contact the Health and Safety Section.