

IMDM INNER – Church Lane, Haslemere, WPH1

Title: Off-Track Impact Accident Injury: Dislocated Finger

Incident



Roots removed using the 'Pigs Tail'

On Friday 6th December 2019 a Team Leader from Guildford Off-Track dislocated his finger while carrying out drainage works in the Haslemere area.

The weather on the day was extremely poor and it was raining heavily. The team were directed to an incident at Church Lane; a suspected ingress of roots had blocked a drainage run causing it to back up and flood. This was to be tackled by manually rodding the drainage system.

A cork-screw or 'pigs-tail' was fixed to the first rod; this is a helically shaped attachment used to ensnare roots so they can be pulled free, releasing the system. Feeding this into the pipes, sections of rods were added until the blockage was reached and then a handle was attached allowing the rods to be turned with force. The IP began to wind the handle with his right hand supporting the rods with his left. Experiencing resistance, he attempted to use his strength to tear through the obstruction however the blockage did not yield and the torque built-up until the handle slipped from his hand, springing back, striking the IP and dislocating his left index finger in the process. Due to the nature of the injury no first aid was given. The IP was taken directly to hospital where he had his finger re-set.

Things to Consider

1. **TAKE FIVE FOR SAFETY** – could the team have thought of a better way to complete their work, or to assess what they were up against, such as a drain survey?
2. Encountering resistance, the IP attempted to force his way through using brute strength and tension built up in the rods rapidly. Would a slower, considered approach have allowed him to more accurately assess the situation as it progressed?
3. In this instance the right gloves were being worn however conditions were poor and they had been used for work prior to this task. Were the gloves wet or compromised with a contaminant such as mud or grease that may have reduced their effectiveness gripping the rods, causing them to slip?
4. First aid – In this case no first aid was applied, and this was the correct decision; resetting a dislocated appendage must only ever be attempted by a trained medical professional.



'Pigs Tail' fixed to drainage rods resting on a catch-pit