

# Protruding Rebar

## Bolt cutter injury

Version 1.1

### Context

FAME H&S Notices are real-world examples of incidents, provided anonymously by FAME members, that highlight learning opportunities for the sector to improve our health and safety working. However, they are not designed to replace existing guidance.

### The Incident

A archaeologist was injured while was using bolt cutters to trim back protruding rebar from reinforced concrete at the top of a newly excavated trench. When the bolt cutters chopped through one of the rebar (4mm thick) easier than expected, the arms closed quickly and hit their chest. The injury is a suspected broken rib and the restriction in movement with the pain has meant the person has been unable to work on site for more than 7 days and so the injury was reportable to HSE (RIDDOR).

The project was in an urban location with concrete needing to be broken out as the first stage of digging the trench. Clearing rebar had not been discussed with the contractor in advance. The risk from protruding rebar was not covered in the project Risk Assessment even though it was a foreseeable risk. The injury occurred with rebar in a corner where positioning to make the cut was more restricted.



## Key Take Aways

- Where other contractors have disc cutter saws available, they can be asked to assist in trimming protruding rebar. Ask them to do this and NOT to borrow their saw;
- The likely presence of rebar in surfaces we dig through can be anticipated so should be considered in Risk Assessments;
- Include more information on hazards that may be encountered such as protruding rebar in excavation procedures;
- When using bolt cutters archaeologists should be advised to hold them away from their torso.

## Resources

HSE's (UK) Providing and using work equipment safely

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg291.pdf>

HAS (Republic of Ireland) Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Chapter 2 of Part 2: Use of Work Equipment

[https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/General\\_Application\\_Regulations/Use\\_of\\_Work\\_Equipment\\_.html](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/General_Application_Regulations/Use_of_Work_Equipment_.html)

Protruding Rebars Hazards and Control Measures

<https://hsseworld.com/protruding-rebarshazards-and-control-measures/>