Issue Number: TLP058   Title: Eye Injury

Overview of Event:

A welder was nearing completion of his shift and working on his last planned weld. As part of this activity he was knocking wedges under the rail, to align the track, when an object flew up and hit him in the eye, believed to be a bit of ballast. The impact was to his left eye. The welder was staggered by the blow, but did not fall to the ground.

At the time of the incident the welder confirmed he was wearing standard site issue eye protection; not the welding goggles which would have been more appropriate for the activity.

The welder attended hospital for an X-ray which confirmed there was no permanent damage although he suffered blurred vision and severe pain following the accident and was off work for 3 days.

Causes:

Immediate -
- A stray projectile passed under the rim of the welder's eye protection and came into contact with his eye.

Root and Underlying Causes

- Failure to wear the correct grade and style of eye protection for the task
- Failure by the Supervisor to ensure all team members received a suitable briefing for the task
- The Task Briefing Sheet (TBS) lacked specific detail on PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) requirements

Eye injury suffered by Welder

Alignment jig under trial

Actions Taken As a Result of the Investigations:

- The Welding Risk Assessment Manual has been updated to make protective requirements clear for each welding task

- A review was carried out by the contractor on the comfort and fitting requirements of eye protection

- Rail alignment jig identified and trialled on the project to reduce the requirement to hammer wedges under the rail

General Key Messages:

- Quality of Supervision – supervisors to carry out a clear instruction of a task and PPE requirements

- The need for robust risk assessments to eliminate hazardous tasks where alternative methods are available.