



## ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

No. 14, April 2006

### Detonator Explosion Results in Loss of Fingers

#### What happened

A quarryman blew the tip off his thumb and the first and second fingers of his left hand when a No. 8 star instantaneous electric detonator he was working with exploded. Shrapnel from the detonator also lacerated his left palm and the top of his left leg.

#### Causes

The cause of the accident is still being determined. The quarryman was checking the detonators for the next day's blast at a small dimension stone quarry. He took a pouch of detonators from the lock up and went into a shed to count and separate them. While he was doing this one of the detonators exploded causing his injuries.

#### Comments and preventative action

- Only properly trained personnel should handle detonators\*
- Detonators should be handled with care at all times
- Protect detonators from external force or impact

\* There is no standard required to handle detonators. However, people in charge have to be approved handlers under HSNO legislation. Other people can assist, under the approved handler's control, if they have had training to assist.



Photograph of exploded detonator showing remains of aluminium tube with the sheathed and coiled leg wires (leads)

- Avoid handling the detonator by the explosive end
- Care must also be taken when handling the fuse head end of the detonator as this contains igniting compounds.
- Wear safety glasses when handling detonators
- Leg wires (commonly known as 'leads') should remain shorted until hook up
- Before touching leg wires operators should make contact with an earth
- Detonators should be kept a safe distance from cell phones and radiotelephones
- Detonators should be enclosed in a suitable container for transporting to a worksite.