



EMPIRE  
PACIFIC

*Risk Management, Inc.*

## HYDROBLASTER SAFETY

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_ Job Name \_\_\_\_\_

High pressure water cleaning has become more common over the past few years, often replacing the need for sand blasting. The uses of hydroblasters vary from paint and grease removal, tank cleaning and log debarking, to rodding of heat exchangers and cleaning of sidewalks.

Although hydroblasters are fairly simple to operate, they can be dangerous if not properly used. A pump is used to increase the water pressure to 10,000 psi, with larger units capable of 45,000 psi or more. This pressurized water is pumped through a flexible steel braided hose and discharged through a pipe called a lance which has an orifice at the end. The water jets, which exit the orifice, act much like a band saw, and this cutting action is the main hazard. This high pressure water can cut through boots, gloves, aprons and any other protective clothing in a fraction of a second. If the jets cut into your foot or hand, it could result in amputation or other severe injury; or the cleaning solution may be injected into your blood stream, which could be fatal.

In spite of this hazard, hydroblasters can be operated safely if proper procedures are followed. No one should operate this equipment without training and proper equipment.

- Personal protective equipment is essential, including a full face shield, hard hat, rain suit, rubber boots with steel toes and metatarsal guards, waterproof gloves and hearing protection.
- Deadman switches/triggers must never be taped, tied, or otherwise altered so the equipment stays in the "on" position. If the lance is dropped it will whip about wildly, causing serious injuries.
- The lance should be a minimum of 36" long to keep the operator from pointing it at himself.
- Horseplay could have very serious consequences - never point a lance at other employees.
- If possible, only clean water should be used. Raw water may contain small quantities of nitrogen, ammonia, or chlorine which could be deadly if vaporized in a confined space.

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# HYDROBLASTER SAFETY (Continued)

- When laying hoses, handle them with care. Also, check each hose to be sure it is marked with the manufacturer's symbol, a serial number, and the maximum operating pressure. Pad the hose at sharp corners or suspend it where necessary.
- Fittings are particularly susceptible to thread wear and wrench damage. Examine all hoses and fittings for defects frequently, and replace if worn.

Operating a hydroblaster can be done safely if these few simple precautions are kept in mind. Think about it the next time you do any high pressure cleaning. If you do not know how to operate the equipment, or do not understand correct procedures, ask your supervisor.

**Safety Recommendations:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Specific Topics:** \_\_\_\_\_

**M.S.D.S Reviewed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## List of Attendees

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