

Near Miss Report

Company Contractor Damaged High Pressure Line



Serving as a construction inspector can be a challenging assignment particularly when inheriting a job that is in progress. During a hydrotest project on a 180 psig line, the primary inspector was away and was temporarily replaced by a different inspector. When the relief inspector arrived on the job site, he found the contractor had installed rock shield on the line and was prepared to backfill. Following good inspection procedures, he insisted the contractor remove the rock shield to permit examination of the line and coating. Upon inspection at least 2 significant scratches that penetrated both the coating and the metal on the pipe were detected and the scratches had to be ground out and repaired by a Company welder. If the inspector had not insisted the rock shield be removed and the line examined, the contractor would have backfilled the damaged line which could have resulted in a safety issue in the future.

Confronting a contractor in circumstances like these is not always a comfortable assignment for an inspector; however it is essential that all procedures be followed accurately and thoroughly no matter how uncomfortable the situation may be. In this circumstance, by insisting the rock shield be removed for inspection, the contractor could have perceived the inspector didn't trust him, which, after working closely with an individual on a long-term project could be awkward.

This event serves as a good reminder of how important it is to follow operating procedures. The inspector who made the right decision in this circumstance was recognized by his co-workers for having the integrity to do the right thing in a difficult situation. By making the right call, he may have averted a future hazard that could have resulted from accelerated corrosion where the pipe was damaged.

