

Environmental – LTI Achilles tendon broken during load alignment			
Number	2022-08	Date	20/05/2022

**Summary:**

On 20.05.2022 an accident occurred during the pre-assembly of a fan hood for a cooling tower. The hood consisted of four GRP parts (GRP = glass reinforced plastic), each one weighing approx. 150 kg. To align the components, every part was lifted a few centimeters off the ground using a crane.

The IP then wanted to align the lifted part so that it could be bolted to its counterpart.

While the IP was moving the part, there was a whip-like noise and the IP collapsed immediately afterwards. The IP was no longer able to stand up.

The work was stopped immediately and the IP was immediately given care by the HZI first responder who was present. An ambulance was called to take the injured IP to hospital for further medical treatment.

**Outcome:**

The IP ruptured his left Achilles tendon. The IP is currently undergoing medical rehabilitation and will not be able to work for at least another 2 months.

**Incident Classification:** LTI , Level 2



Root Causes and Contributory Factors	Lesson Learned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The root cause cannot be determined beyond doubt, as the forces that the IP had to apply were not sufficient to cause an overstrain of the Achilles tendon.</li> <li>The IP also stated that he had not received any medical treatment that might have contributed to the event neither he could remember any previous damage to his Achilles tendon.</li> <li>A possible contributory cause is identified as the awkward posture of the IP during the alignment process, which may have led to overstretching and therefore rupture of the Achilles tendon.</li> </ul>	<p>It will not be possible to completely avoid this type of accident. It is much more important that we always reflect on our actions in order to recognise possible dangers and thus avoid accidents. Therefore, please note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you feel physically unable to perform a task assigned to you, inform your supervisor. Do not take any risks.</li> <li>Always try to adopt an ergonomic posture when carrying out work in order to avoid overloading the musculoskeletal system.</li> <li>Wherever possible, use mechanical devices to handle loads.</li> </ul>