

Safety and health alert

12/94 Serious injury - amputation of arm

Incident

A female employee had her right arm torn off above the elbow when her hand became trapped in a pasta making machine.

The machine was operating with the lid in the open position. A micro switch which should have prevented the machine from operating unless the lid was closed, did not always function. This allowed the employee to come into contact with the rotating blades whilst attempting to remove excess product from the rim of the mixing bowl.

A similar accident recently occurred with a lasagne making machine at another premises which also resulted in extensive damage to the forearm and upper arm of a female employee. Again the operation of the micro switch was faulty.

Factors

1. A faulty micro switch failed to stop the machinery when the lid was open; and
2. Staff were inadequately trained and supervised.

Recommendations

1. Owners of machinery must ensure adequate maintenance is carried out on their plant and that micro switches function reliably.
2. All importers, suppliers and service agents of this type of equipment are reminded of their obligations to the operators of this equipment under Section 23 of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act*.
3. Employees must receive adequate induction training to ensure they are aware of the potential hazards associated with any machinery they are required to operate or clean.
4. Employees must be trained to report malfunctions (refer Sections 19(1)(b) and 20(2)(d) of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act*).

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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