

Safety and health alert

03/95 The hazardous maintenance of machinery

Incident

A boilermaker received traumatic amputation of a leg, and other injuries which were subsequently fatal, when he was caught in the workings of a silica lime brick press, which started unexpectedly.

The boilermaker was repairing a section of the brick press, while an electrician was fault finding on another section of the brick press. The boilermaker applied his danger tag to an on/off control switch, and some time later was working in a hazardous location when the brick press unexpectedly started.

Factors

1. The danger tag procedure provided a warning not to operate, rather than the physical prevention offered by a lockout procedure.
2. Employees, including supervisors, were not adequately trained in the existing tagout procedure.
3. For convenience short-cuts were taken with the existing tagout procedure.

Recommendations

1. Where practicable, lockout procedures should be used rather than only tagout procedures.
2. Employers must ensure that employees, including supervisors, are given instruction and training in relevant occupational health and safety procedures.
3. Adequate supervision must be provided to ensure that relevant occupational health and safety procedures are followed.
4. Machinery should be locked out and tagged out at the main isolator rather than at control switches.

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.

Date: February 1995

A414207

