

Safety and health alert

01/98 Power press guarding

Incident

An experienced power press operator at a Welshpool metal manufacturing workshop lost part of three of her fingers in September 1997 when the machine malfunctioned.

The power press that caused the accident is featured in the photograph and was fitted with a lift gate guard incorporating an electrical limit switch for front access to the trapping space and vee bar guards on the other three sides.

The press some years earlier had a mechanical guard, but this was removed by the previous owner and an interlocking electrical limit switch installed.

The press was operated with the gate closed and on completion of a stroke, the gate was opened to remove the pressed product. Unfortunately the machine double stroked while the operator had her hand in the trapping space.

Factors

- This power press did not have an automatic feed.
- This particular type of power press is prone to occasionally double stroke.
- The lifting gate guard was electrically interlocked, with no mechanical interlock fitted between the gate and clutch mechanism.

Recommendations

- As far as possible, minimise hand entry into the trapping space of a power press. Use an inclined press with automatic feed, a hand tool or a magnet wherever possible.
- With this type of power press, any gate interlock must mechanically disengage the clutch.
- Any guard interlock must be periodically checked to ensure it operates correctly at all times.
- For further guidance on the safe use of power presses refer to *AS1219-1994 Power Presses - Safety Requirements*, and *AS4024.1 - 1996 Safeguarding of Machinery - General Principles*, clause 10.18.1.

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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