

Safety and health alert

11/00 Severe conveyor incident

Incident

In January 2000, an employee at a foundry received de-gloving injuries to both feet, when they were trapped between the idler roller and moving slats at the head section of a metal-slatted drying conveyor when it started running.

This occurred when the injured person failed to isolate the conveyor electrically prior to accessing the top of the conveyor to undertake the coring of sand moulds.

Colleagues freed the injured person's feet by the use of oxy acetylene equipment and had him transported by ambulance to Fremantle Hospital for treatment.

Factors

1. The company failed to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment of work on the conveyor system (in particular when employees were involved in coring work).
2. The injured person ventured away from his usual work station to commence coring work on the moulds. The distance prevented him from accessing the controls on his control panel when the conveyor started.
3. The injured person failed to isolate the conveyor at his control panel prior to getting on to the top of the conveyor.
4. No physical barriers were located around the high hazard area of the slatted drying conveyor to prevent employees from accessing the area where the employee was injured.
5. The coring cycle 'stop' control not being activated by the employee allowed the conveyor system to be activated manually by an operative (at another control panel), whose view of the conveyor was obstructed.

Recommendations

1. Employers are required to conduct risk assessments to ensure that employees are not exposed to hazards associated with the operation of plant within the workplace. Where risks are identified from such assessments, control measures should be introduced to eliminate or minimise such risks. (Occupational Safety & Health Regulations 4.28, 4.29 and 4.37 refer)
2. Conveyors must be electrically isolated prior to employees getting on to them, if indeed that is necessary.
3. Employees who are required to work on a conveyor must have access to an emergency lanyard stop or an emergency stop control. (Refer to Australian Standard AS1755-1986)
4. Where practicable, employees with the responsibility for starting a conveyor system should have an unobstructed view of the conveyor. In addition, some type of signal should activate before the conveyor begins to move.



5. Employers must instruct and train their employees in respect of safe work procedures.
6. Supervisors should ensure that employees work in accordance with the training provided.

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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