

# Safety and health alert

## 01/02 Young worker injured by damaged plant

### Incident

A young worker received crush injuries to the fingers of his right hand while cleaning a pizza dough rolling machine at a fast food outlet in Kalgoorlie. The electrical interlock switch located under the rear cover of the machine was inoperative because it had been physically damaged. However, the interlock switch had also been "electrically bridged" out of the circuit. This meant that, even if it had not been damaged, it would not have stopped the rotation of the dough rollers when an employee opened the cover for cleaning.

### Factors

1. The employer, who knew the interlock switch was damaged and that the dough feeder chute had become detached from the top of the machine, failed to have a competent person assess the extent of the damage.
2. The employer did not have a lock-out system whereby plant was isolated from all energy sources and locked out using lock-out devices when employees at the workplace were required to clean the plant.
3. The employer failed to provide a safe system of work on how to clean the pizza dough rolling machine. Had there been such a system employees could have been trained and supervisors would have known what to watch out for.

### Recommendations

- Employers must ensure that damage to plant that increases the risk of injury or harm to persons at the workplace is assessed by a competent person.  
Regulation 4.38(a) of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 states that a person, who at a workplace is an employer, a main contractor, or a self employed person must ensure when plant at a workplace has been damaged to the extent that its function or condition is impaired in a manner that increases the risk of injury or harm to a person at the workplace, that a competent person assesses the damage and advise the first mentioned person of the nature of the damage.
- Employers must conduct risk assessments to ensure that employees are not exposed to hazards associated with the operation of plant at the workplace. (Occupational Safety and Health Regulation 3.1 refers). Where unacceptable risks are identified from these assessments, controls should be introduced to protect employees. (Occupational Safety & Health Regulations 4.28, 4.29 and 4.37 refer)
- If access to plant is required for cleaning, employers must ensure that plant is stopped and all energy sources are isolated using isolation devices and locked out using lock-out devices. (Occupational Safety & Health Regulation, 4.37 (3)(a) refers)

### Further Information

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

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