

Safety and health alert

17/05 Isolation of plant and machinery

Incident

In a furniture factory a process worker/machine operator suffered severe lacerations to the right hand and wrist after coming into contact with the rotating drilling head of a machine used for the processing of furniture components.

This machine had jammed three times that day. On the first two occasions the operator had turned the machine off and called a supervisor for assistance. The third time the operator left the machine running whilst looking for the problem. It was at this time that the injuries occurred.

The workplace had a procedure for and had provided training in isolation, lock out and tag out of the equipment.

Factors to consider

- The machine had not been correctly isolated from all energy sources when the injury occurred.
- The workplace had a system and procedure for the correct isolation of plant, but it was not followed.
- Operators of machinery at this workplace were trained in the isolation procedure but did not use it.

Recommendations

1. Once an isolation system has been introduced, it must be strictly followed.
2. The system should be reviewed from time to time to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.
3. An employer must ensure that inspection, repair, maintenance, alteration or cleaning of plant at the workplace is carried out according to the manufacturer's or a competent person's instructions.

Further information

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