

# Safety and health alert

## 18/95 Worker loses foot in auger

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### Incident

A worker had his foot amputated after being trapped in an auger at an abattoir during July 1996.

The incident occurred in the by-products section of an abattoir where the person worked. The auger, set into a channel below floor level, was covered by a checkered metal plate. The auger was operated for long periods and used to take by-products away from a press for further treatment.

The cover plate was damaged late in the afternoon. The incident was reported to the next person in-charge. Approximately half an hour later a worker inadvertently stepped back onto the damaged plate. His foot went through onto the auger, subsequently resulting in his right foot being amputated. Poorly or inadequately guarded augers frequently cause horrific injuries to workers.

### Factors

1. The cover plate appears to have been of inadequate strength due to corrosion.
2. Following initial damage to the cover plate and reporting of the hazard, no immediate changes to the work process occurred.
3. Management and workers failed to appreciate the extent of the hazard and potential risk of serious injury to workers.

### Recommendations

1. If an auger is not adequately guarded, it must not be used unless an alternative safe system of work is in place.
2. Guards prone to corrosion must be regularly checked, and maintenance implemented if excessive corrosion is observed.
3. Any reports of unsafe or poorly guarded machinery warrants an immediate response.

### 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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