

# Safety and health alert

# 14/96 Employee caught in fruit grading machinery

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## Incident

An employee received severe injuries when his sweater became caught in a rotating drive shaft, spinning the employee through several 360 degree cycles before the machine was stopped.

The incident occurred on an apple grading machine whilst the employee was carrying out general out general maintenance and checking of bearings.

The fleecy sweater the employee was wearing became caught in the drive shaft of the apple grading machine which was 1.3 metres above the ground. The sweater appears to have wound tightly onto the shaft. The employee was picked up and spun, his body hitting fixtures and causing serious injury to his feet, legs, arms and chest.

## Factors

- (a) Maintenance was being carried out on moving machinery.
- (b) Clothing worn was inappropriate for working near moving machinery.
- (c) The drive shaft was unguarded.
- (d) No emergency lanyard was fitted along the length of the shaft.
- (e) The worker was working alone.

## Recommendations

1. Owners of machinery must identify hazards associated with the use and maintenance of their plant and have clearly documented procedures.
2. As far as possible, maintenance should occur on stationery locked out machinery.
3. Any maintenance on operational plant must be undertaken with considerable care and generally with assistance.
4. Drive shafts should typically be guarded, even during maintenance, eg the use of a loose sleeve guard (see sketch) or an emergency lanyard used along the length of the shaft.
5. Loose fitting clothing should not be worn in the vicinity of moving machinery.

## 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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