

Safety and health alert

31/00 Yard hand's forearm and wrist crushed

Incident

In April a yard hand had his right forearm and wrist crushed while operating an hydraulic press used for the butt jointing of timber, using gang nails.

The yard hand was operating the press using a two-hand control device. He was not happy with the way the wood was lining-up and took his hand off the right hand button, which stopped the ram from moving. He then put his hand through the centre of the ram system (behind the ram and above the platen) to straighten the wood. While he was doing this, his left hand came off the other button which energised the ram to return to its 'parked' position. The man's arm was trapped by the returning platen as it moved upwards.

The yard hand was unable to release his arm and shouted for help. He was released when another employee working some distance away heard him shouting.

Factors

1. The machine was not adequately guarded.
2. Training in a safe system of work was not provided.
3. The level of supervision was not adequate to prevent an unsafe system of work developing.
4. The yard hand was working alone.

Recommendations

1. Ensure as far as practicable that all plant is guarded in accordance with AS4024.1-1996.
2. Employers should ensure that safe systems of work are identified and that employees are trained in those safe systems.
3. Employers should ensure that employees are adequately supervised.
4. When employees are required to operate hazardous machinery employers should, as far as practicable, ensure that other employees are working in the vicinity to provide assistance in the event of an emergency.

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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