

Safety and health alert

16/03 Worker injured by hay press

Incident

A worker severely injured his knee while working on an unguarded hay press.

While operating the press, he noticed that one of the four reels that fed the strapping machines (a) was about to run out. He put on a new reel and, without stopping the machine, proceeded to insert the strap into one of the far strapping machines (b). To do this, he had to stand on the frame of the press (c) and lean across the bales where they come out of the strapping machine after being strapped.

He was about to replace the strap when the press started to push another bale into the machine to be strapped. At that moment, the worker had his left leg in a gap between the two bales and as the bales were being pushed out, he was dragged past a metal rail towards a metal detector (d).

His lower leg was pulled away from the knee joint tearing the three ligaments away from the knee bone. He also received severe bruising from his hip down to his ankle and his lower calf was severely crushed causing blood clots in that area of his body.

Factors

1. The area where the bales emerge after being strapped was not guarded.
2. The system of work of inserting the straps into the far strapping machines was unsafe because the press was allowed to run while this procedure was taking place.
3. The lockout procedure was not followed.
4. The training of workers was inadequate and incorrect.
5. There was a lack of supervision.

Recommendations

1. That the area of the machine where the accident occurred be adequately guarded.
2. That a system of work be put in place that ensures workers are trained and supervised in the correct method of changing straps on the strapping machines and in using the lockout procedure.

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.

A413338

Date: November 2003

