

## Lathe Operator Killed by Rotating Shaft



### What happened?

A lathe operator was struck in the head and killed by a stainless steel rod extending from the back of a metal lathe.

The incident appears to have happened just after the operator activated the lathe, setting the speed to 1,000 revolutions per minute (rpm). The stainless steel rod, 1” in diameter, was secured to the clamp in the lathe and was sticking out roughly 48” from the back of the machine. The excessive length of material extending from the lathe and the high rpm created a wobble effect that caused the shaft to bend nearly 90 degrees, spinning it like a propeller.

It is presumed that the worker was at or near the controls of the lathe when this happened and did not stop the machine. The operator apparently walked towards the back of the lathe and was struck in the head by the rapidly spinning bent steel rod.

### What can you do to prevent this from happening at your workplace?

- Cut power before going to the back of the machine.
- Avoid having excessive material sticking out the rear of a lathe or add support stands that hold the excess material when needed.
- Conduct a job safety analysis (JSA) for those who must work on or around the hazard area. A JSA is a systematic method for identifying hazards associated with the job or task which can in turn help identify special training needs associated with the work.
- Train your workers on the hazards that have been identified.

### **Need more information?**

Go to [www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics) for information on workplace safety and health, rules and policies, sample programs, and general assistance. Call 1-800-423-7233 to contact the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH)>

### **Interested in a free safety and health consultation at your workplace?**

You may request assistance from DOSH by telephone, letter or in person. You may request a complete review of your company's safety and health status or ask for help with a specific problem. A consultant will contact you to schedule a time and date for a free onsite consultation. Visit [www.SafetyConsultants.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.SafetyConsultants.Lni.wa.gov) for phone numbers and e-mail addresses of consultants in your area.

### **How does an employee file a complaint?**

Employees or employee representatives may file formal complaints with DOSH when they believe a safety or health hazard exists in their workplace. Complaint forms are available from a local L&I office in both English and Spanish, or on the Web at [www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics/Complaint/](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics/Complaint/).

**Contact us. We're here to help.**