

Worker Killed in Wood Chip Conveyor



What happened?

A welder working on a conveyor was killed when another worker activated the machinery, pulling in the welder and crushing him.

The victim was one of three journey-level maintenance workers repairing a 400-foot long wood chip conveyor system. The machine's controls were at the incline end and had a lockable 480-volt switch, but none of the three workers used their individual locks to lock out the switch and prevent its activation.

One of the workers was at the out-feed end of the conveyor, installing grooves in the conveyor belt. At the other end of the conveyor, 400 feet away, were the other two workers, including the victim, who were welding at the feed end. The victim was sitting on the conveyor belt welding on a funnel cone at the feed end and blocked from view.

The worker at the incline end needed to turn on the machine briefly to reposition the belt. Before doing so, he sent a co-worker to see if the conveyor was clear. The co-worker saw one worker clear of the conveyor but was unaware of the other worker welding. The conveyor was turned on and the victim was pulled under the metal funnel cone and crushed.

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

- When performing maintenance, always lock out equipment that can unexpectedly start.
- Review and follow lockout/tagout procedures prior to working on equipment. Update procedures when necessary.
- Make sure all employees are trained on lockout/tagout policies and procedures.
- Conduct a job safety analysis (JSA) for those who must work on or around hazardous equipment. A JSA is a systematic method for identifying hazards associated with the job or task.

Need more information?

Go to www.Lni.wa.gov/Safety/Basics for information on 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?

Employers, 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 on-site consultation. Visit www.SafetyConsultants.Lni.wa.gov for contact information for 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.

Contact us. We're here to help.

This bulletin was developed by L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) to alert employers, labor groups, and employees of a tragic loss of life. The information in this bulletin is based on preliminary data and does NOT represent final determinations of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality