Chips Bury Lone Laborer

A laborer was pushing hardwood chips along on a conveyor toward the digester in a paper mill. Working alone within the chip bin, he was using a pole 12 feet (3.7 meters) in length to increase the flow of chips.

A co-worker came to check on the operation and found the pile of chips in the bin had fallen and completely covered the laborer. The victim was taken by ambulance to a hospital where he died three days later from the effects of lack of oxygen when he was buried.

Doing a job such as this alone and without the correct safety equipment can have fatal results.

The worker should have been wearing a safety harness attached to a lifeline. Someone should have been stationed outside the bin ready to start a rescue procedure if something went wrong. Poor supervision, lack of commitment to safety and worker apathy lead to accidents such as this.

If you got into trouble on the job, would someone be there to rescue you? Make sure you follow all your company's emergency preparation policies.