Housekeeping on Construction Sites Fatality File

Worker Dies Because of Lack of Supervision and Unguarded Conveyor

A young New Brunswick worker died of his injuries after his leg was pulled into a conveyor at a wood pellet plant. WorkSafeBC's investigation revealed that the conveyor had broken down twice in the days before the accident; during the repair a guard was removed and was not replaced.

The young man was cleaning the conveyor on a night shift and was not told that the conveyor's guard was removed during the day shift. Because the area was poorly lit, combined with poor housekeeping, the worker could not see that the guard was missing and was pulled into the moving conveyor.

The employer was charged for violating section 9 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act for failing to provide the necessary supervision.

WorkSafeBC determined the primary causes of the incident to be:

- Lack of employee supervision: As a young worker, closer supervision was required.
- Failure to safeguard the machinery: The conveyor was not reassembled according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Poor housekeeping.

Recommended Actions to Prevent Similar Incidents from Happening:

- Provide the supervision necessary to ensure a worker's health and safety. This includes ensuring that every worker is aware of all their tasks and responsibilities.
- Ensure workers know about any hazards associated with the handling of tools, machinery, or equipment that they use in

the course of their jobs by providing information, instruction and training.

- Ensure that a machine is operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions or in accordance with the safety requirements at all times.
- Ensure that work areas are well-lit.
- Prevent the buildup of dust through good housekeeping.
- Introduce a written procedure to ensure the machine is safe to operate, with all guards in place, before being put back in operation after work is performed on the machine.