Hydraulic Door Crushes Welder

An experienced mechanic/welder was crushed to death by a door on a metal shredder at a large scrap iron facility. The hydraulically-operated door flips down to reject unshredded metals. Sometimes stray metal prevents the door from closing. One night the victim’s supervisor sent him to remove such a jam. The victim checked out a padlock and told co-workers he locked out the system, but investigators learned it was neither locked out nor de-energized.

The victim torched away the obstructing metal. The door, still under pressure, closed upward on the victim. The unexpected impact knocked the supervisor off a ladder, severely injuring his back. A co-worker activated hydraulics to release pressure on the victim. He was given CPR on a nearby catwalk, but pronounced dead at the scene. Investigators found the lockout lick in the victim’s clothing ? unused.

Investigators recommended everyone follow established procedures for lockout/tagout and de-energizing of energy sources. They also recommended mechanisms be blocked from moving before maintenance.

Even someone like the welder, with 20 years of work history, should sign off a check sheet or do additional compliance procedures to prove conformity to safe practices.