Laborer Buried as Sand Collapses In Hopper

A mixer operator in a cement roofing tile plant noticed that the sand was not flowing from the bottom of a hopper onto the conveyor belt.

A plant laborer was instructed by the operator to enter the top of the hopper to try to clear the blockage by shoveling sand from the edges of the hopper.

The blockage collapsed while the laborer was in the hopper. Consequently the sand carried him down to the bottom where he was buried and died from suffocation.

A different method of clearing blockages and the use of fall arrest equipment are just two of the possible ways this situation could have been handled differently.

In an incident like this, the blame will be placed on several different individuals from the design engineers to plant managers, the safety trainer and even the laborer himself. But unfortunately, blaming anyone for this won’t bring back the individual who died. Talking about why this fatality happened could prevent it from happening to you or a co-worker.

Can you think of a similar situation where this could have happened to you? If so… then don’t put off bringing it up to someone who is in a position to do something about it. It could save your life!