Laborer Sucked Into Portable Mortar Mixer

Co-workers saw an 18-year-old laborer being pulled between the rotating paddles of a portable mortar mixer. The young worker was working at a residential construction site, cleaning the mixer for the next day’s work, when his arm became entangled in the blades and he was sucked in. An onlooker was unable to disengage the gears and by the time another worker responded it was too late. The young man died.

Consider steps you can take to protect yourself and ensure your worksite is a safe one. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you understand how the machinery you use operates? Have you received training that will allow you to operate the machinery safely and to identify hazards?
- Does your worksite have a written safety program? Does the program identify hazards for each job task and outline safe work procedures?
- Are procedures in place to ensure equipment is operating in accordance with the manufacturer’s specified procedures? Are warning labels clearly visible on all machines?
- Do workers at your worksite review and practice the company’s lockout and tagout program regularly?
- Is an engine-kill switch mounted and plainly visible on all machines? A kill switch makes it easy for workers to stop machinery quickly.