Lack of Maintenance Sets Stage for Explosion

Failure to maintain equipment resulted in a fatal explosion in a metal products plant.

Oil that had oozed from a hydraulic press caught fire. The fire caused two hydraulic fluid accumulators to explode. The explosion occurred when workers opened a pressure valve on a press machine while preparing to make pipe.

One employee was killed and 17 others were injured. The blast blew the roof off the plant and scattered debris hundreds of feet from the building.

Investigation into the explosion indicated the machinery had not been maintained and there were no machinery manuals available for the workers. Proper training and routine maintenance would have helped in preventing this fatal incident