Lathes Fatality File

Machinist Dies After Being Pulled into Manual Lathe

A 52-year-old machinist at a manufacturing company was preparing to spot drill the center of a 103-inch piece of round steel in a manual lathe. Because of the length of the steel, 24 inches of the material was protruding out of the back of the unguarded lathe, held in place with an aftermarket clamping device that rotates as the lathe rotates. Security footage showed that while the lathe was in operation and the steel rod was spinning, the machinist attempted to grab a glove from the top of the lathe. The sleeve of his shirt became entangled on the clamping device, pulling him into the lathe between the motor and rotating piece of steel. As the lathe continued to turn, the machinist's body rotated around the piece of steel and struck the motor about 12 times. An employee in the changing room heard the event, ran out to investigate, shut down the machine and called emergency medical services. First responders transported the partially conscious machinist to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival. Cause of death was listed as traumatic blunt force injuries.

To help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Fabricate or purchase guarding and affix it to machines to protect operators from rotating components.
- Mark "No entry areas" clearly and provide applicable training.
- Prohibit machine operators from wearing loose-fitting clothing while operating lathes.
- Consider implementing a job hazard analysis procedure.
- Regularly provide hazard awareness training to employees.