Press Brake Operator Hit By Steel Lug

A 39-year-old brake press operator was killed when an exceptionally large metal sheet (lug) was ejected from the machinery he was operating and hit him in the head and chest. The operator was using a press brake with no guard in place to finish curving the 290-pound lug. He was standing near a forklift that was helping support the lug, close to the point of operation, as he applied pressure two to three inches from the edge of the lug. The lug slipped off of the back of the bottom die and was ejected from the press brake. The ejected lug hit the worker in the head and chest. He was taken to the hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Machine guarding is the first line of defense against physical hazards from moving machinery. Government safety standards state that one or more forms of guarding should be used to protect employees. If it can be shown that this is impractical, then increasing distance from the operation can be used as a form of guarding. Employees need to be trained to recognize the hazards that equipment and processes pose to them. Such hazards can be learned from the machine’s operating manual. Finally, employers should develop, implement and enforce a health and safety program that includes training based on written task-specific and machine-specific safe operating procedures.

Source: Oklahoma Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 05OK005