

Robot Pins Die Cast Operator

An experienced die cast operator's heart stopped after he was pinned between a hydraulic robot and a pole.

The robot was programmed to take casting from the die-cast machine, dip it into a quench tank and insert it into an automatic trim press—all in one minute.

The victim entered the robot's working area by either climbing the safety rail or walking through a gap between the rail and die-casting equipment. Carrying an air gun, he may have been trying to clean scrap metal off the floor.

A fellow employee heard an air hose hissing for 10 to 15 minutes and discovered the victim pinned between the rear of the robot and a safety pole. The robot stalled when it contacted the man's body. It continued to apply pressure on his chest.

Rescue efforts included unpinning the worker, administering CPR and transporting him to a hospital. Five days later, he was pronounced brain dead.

Investigators of this fatal accident said the victim's behavior may have been a cause. Despite warnings, he had been previously seen inside the envelope while the robot was running. No one should enter a robot's work envelope without first putting the robot on hold or in "power down mode." If a robot is stopped, don't assume it will remain stopped. If it's repeating a motion, don't assume that it will continue to repeat only that motion.

Becoming bored with automated tasks, overconfident or losing concern for safety increases your risk of injury.