Safety-Conscious Engineer is Tangled in Rotating Machine

An electrical engineer became fatally entangled in a piece of rotating machinery.

The victim was a partner in a company installing new computerized equipment in a sawmill. The pressure was on to get the new system in working order. He had worked a long shift and returned to the job site after dinner which included one beer. Companions saw no signs of fatigue or intoxication.

He was having difficulty lining up the feed rollers of a saw edger. The problem was believed to be electrical or computer-related. Because the system was still under construction, the rollers were not yet guarded by a cover, but a temporary wooden barrier had been built to prevent workers from getting too close to the open machinery.

The victim had gone inside this barrier and was within inches of the uncovered high-speed revolving rollers. He was activating the photocell, which would automatically make the edge rollers stop and go. His sweater caught in the roller. He was pulled into the spinning rollers and crushed to death.

The victim was the person in charge in this work setting. His own company had a policy of co-operating in safety matters when working with other companies. Safety guards were in place to prevent incidents such as this one. Yet the victim ignored basic safety standards by working close to revolving equipment while wearing loose-fitting clothing. Always stick to safety rules, no matter how experienced you are or how much pressure you feel to finish a job.