Supervisor’s Arms Caught Between Rollers

A shift supervisor died after both arms were caught and partially amputated between two paper machine rollers.

The victim was inspecting the condition of a woolen-felt screen at a paper-manufacturing plant when the incident occurred.

The supervisor entered the unguarded roller access area and began feeling the woolen-felt screen for any possible damage that may have caused a break. It appears the victim’s hands became caught between the top and bottom rollers and his arms were pulled up into the rollers at the nip point.

A co-worker activated the lever on the control panel, which raised the top roller, allowing the victim to fall to the floor. He then ran to aid the victim and discovered the victim’s right arm had been partially amputated at the shoulder area. The co-worker called the plant’s nurse who arrived within two minutes and checked for vital signs. The nurse found the victim unconscious, bleeding profusely and without a pulse. An ambulance was called while the nurse and other co-workers tried to control bleeding and performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The victim was soon transported to the local hospital, where he died.

After the investigation, it was recommended that employers:

- Consider the development and installation of permanent interlocking gates which protect workers from hazardous areas.
- Review and revise existing safety programs.
- Affix and maintain danger/warning signs or placards at conspicuous places regarding hazardous areas.
- Conduct scheduled and unscheduled worksite inspections.
- Conduct evaluations at other plants for similar hazards.