Warehouse Automation: Robots, AGVs and Worker Interaction Safety Fatality File

Employee was killed by industrial robots

On March 30, 2004, an employee was working for Gentrag Corporation that manufactured motor vehicle transmission and power train parts. Some of the tasks at this work site were automated and were handled by industrial robots. An industrial robot moved assembled product from a conveyer to one of two machines for testing. The robot then unloaded the product and placed the product onto another conveyer for movement to the next processing step. The robot and the two testing machines were separated from employees and the rest of the plant by solid walls on three sides and a chain link fence on one side creating a robot work cell. Interlocked gates were present in the fence and one wall. On March 30, 2004, the employee entered the barricaded work cell while the system was in operation. The employee was caught by the head or neck between the fixture on the end of the robotic arm and the testing machine and was killed. The gates into the work cell were found to be closed following the accident. The employee may have gained entry by climbing over the fence or crawling through openings in the fence where product was moved by conveyer out of the work cell.

Source: https://www.osha.gov