



HAZARD ALERT

On June 2, 2010, a tire plant's emergency alarm system was sounded. A USW member was trapped in a tire trimming station. She attempted to activate the emergency stop button. Co-workers heard her scream for help. Fellow USW members ran to her aid and activated the emergency stop button. The machine's unguarded shaft stopped rotating.

Although the emergency stop was activated, a tire drop gate continued to move up and down striking the trapped sister in the head each time. The first responder found her screaming for help. The pneumatic air that supplies the tire drop gate cylinder had to be manually shut off.

The previous day, our USW sister had just finished her initial training and was certified to operate the trim station. While performing her task, she would use a wheeled roller trim blade knife to remove tire flashing and rubber vent stems from the finished tire. The accumulation of tire flashing would build up around an unguarded rotating shaft and the operator's workplace station floor. Flashing accumulated on the workplace floor. The worker picked up the tire rubber flashing. As she lifted the flashing, one or more loose ends of rubber came into contact with the power shaft, wrapping them around the rotating shaft.

As the rotating shaft pulled the rubber flashing, it also pulled her gloved right -hand in as well. She was then pulled to the floor wrapping her hand and arm one and a half times around the unguarded keyed shaft. Her arm was broken approximately two to three inches from her wrist, breaking both forearm bones.

As the first responders began to extricate her, they had to remove drive belts and pillow block bearings that supported the drive shaft. She was trapped in excess of 20 minutes. She was transported to the hospital for treatment and surgery.

Preliminary results found by the USW investigation team:

- The rotating shaft was not properly protected by machine guarding.
- Emergency stop button did not have a red mushroom head and the trapped USW member could not reach it while trapped in the machine.
- There was only one manual stop button for the whole trim station.
- The emergency stop button did not stop the machine entirely; the tire drop gate was still cycling.
- Worker was not trained to clean up rubber debris when the machine was stopped.
- Job hazard analysis was not current.
- Pre-shift safety checks were not established.
- A push to get the machine back into production had occurred.

Recommendations:

- Implement proper and required machine guarding.
- Review other equipment to identify and correct all unguarded rotating shafts.
- Check emergency stops on all equipment to ensure proper working order. Install appropriate emergency stops where necessary.
- Review job hazard analysis throughout workplace to ensure they are all updated annually.
- Revise training for cleaning and clearing of rubber at workstations.
- Implement pre-shift safety check.
- Utilize LO/TO LABEL to clean and/or service shafts.



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The information provided in this alert is based on preliminary data only and does not represent final determinations pertaining to the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of this event.