Caught in Motion: Pinch-Points, Moving Parts and Machinery Safety Fatality File



Employee Killed After Becoming Trapped in Energized Conveyor Belt

At 9:40 p.m. on August 13, 2024, an employee was fatally injured while clearing debris from an elevated conveyor belt system. The worker had stepped onto the conveyor to verify that the obstruction had been removed when the machine unexpectedly energized. The sudden start-up caused the employee to lose balance and fall into a pinch point. He became trapped between a fixed metal support bar and the moving conveyor belt, suffering fatal chest-compression injuries. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

OSHA’s investigation found that the conveyor’s energy sources had not been isolated and locked out prior to maintenance work. The system allowed access to multiple moving pinch points, and no engineering controls prevented the belt from starting while a worker was on the equipment. The incident underscores the deadly consequences of interacting with machinery that has not been fully de-energized, as well as the critical need for guarding, lockout/tagout procedures, and strict control of hazardous motion.

Source: Osha.gov