Young Workers and Restaurant Safety Fatality File



A 15-year-old part-time worker (the victim) at a retail grocery store suffered amputation of the right arm as a result of being caught by the auger of a meat grinder while he was reassembling it. The victim, working after school, had completed washing and cleaning the disassembled parts of the grinder and was reassembling it without de-energizing and locking out the machine’s power supply. He inserted the auger into the grinder’s housing and reached through the feed-throat with his right hand to guide it into engagement. As he did so, he bumped against the unprotected on/off lever switch mounted about waist high on the machine’s side. The grinder started and the auger pulled his hand and arm into the housing. He turned the machine off, pulled his arm from the grinder housing and ran toward the front of the store.

The store manager applied pressure to his bleeding arm while a coworker called 911. The victim was transported to a local hospital. His right arm had been amputated just below the elbow. A magnetic safety switch mounted on top of the motor starter was designed to prevent operation when the Removable Tub was taken off. The safety switch had not worked for over 16 years and employees were not aware that the safety switch existed.