

Lockout Procedures During Maintenance

WHAT HAPPENED

A control room operator detected a rotation failure on a bark conveyor belt. An area operator went to troubleshoot the rotation sensor. The area operator was in communication with the control room operator via radio. The area operator signaled the control room operator to start the equipment. The control room operator started the belt conveyor but detected a second rotation failure a short while later. Unable to contact the area operator by radio, the control room operator went to investigate and found the area operator caught between the belt and the drum. The supervisor and plant emergency personnel responded; however, the area operator had sustained a fatal injury. It is believed that the area operator attempted to clear a jam and/or clear the rotation sensor eye without first isolating and locking out the equipment and accidentally became caught between the drum and the belt.

CAUSAL FACTORS

Physical causal factors:

- Inadequate sealing on the sides of the feeder resulted in bark accumulation near the sensor and the belt-drum transition.

Human causal factors:

- Although the employee was trained and aware of lockout requirements, lockout procedure was not followed.
- The employee was in contact with moving equipment.

System causal factors:

- The accumulation of bark was not recognized as an issue.
- There was not communication between employees and leadership regarding bark accumulation.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Retrain all employees on lockout procedures to ensure complete understanding.
- Improve the sealing on the sides of the feeder to prevent bark accumulation. In addition to reducing rotation issues, this will provide a significant housekeeping and productivity improvement.
- Meet with employees and supervisors to discuss the importance of communication about incidents and operational issues up and down the line.
- Conduct a complete guarding assessment of the plant and other operations.
- Until a long-term solution to the accumulation of bark proves to be effective, implement a schedule to frequently check and clean this area and similar areas.



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