Crush fatality in factory

11 September 2019

Incident overview

A 32 year-old man sustained fatal injuries at a factory in St Marys when he became caught in a timber pallet-making machine.

Photograph of pallet making machine involved in the incident.

The investigation

- SafeWork NSW inspectors responded to the incident.
- SafeWork NSW commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident.
Safety Information


Consider ‘reasonably practicable’ control measures to manage the risk of plant in the workplace.

Use the following risk management process:

- Identify all foreseeable hazards associated with machinery, including mechanical hazards, such as entanglement, impact and cutting, and non-mechanical hazards, such as ergonomic, electrical, dust, confined spaces and the like.
- Manage the risks associated with these hazards.
- Use the most effective machine guarding, such as permanently fixed guards or interlocked guards, that don’t rely on human behaviour – make sure the guards can’t contact moving parts.
- Control access to dangerous areas, screen harmful emissions, minimise noise and prevent ejected parts from striking people.
- Program machine re-setting, particularly during maintenance, to prevent unexpected start-up or movement.

When working with machinery:

- Do a pre-start check before using, to confirm it's safe.
- Make sure all guards are working.
- Use it for the purpose it was designed.
- Follow operating procedures when setting-up, operating, cleaning and maintaining.
- Don’t remove guards or bypass safety devices.
- Isolate the machine and make sure all stored energy has dissipated before accessing hazardous areas.
- When doing maintenance in ‘jogging mode’, make sure guards remain in place and are effective in managing risks.

Further information