Laborer Dies Tangled In Mixer



An 18-year-old laborer died after becoming entangled in a portable mortar mixer.

The victim was cleaning the mixer at the end of his shift when his arm became stuck in the machine, resulting in his body being pulled into the blades.

A nearby painter ran to the mixer and attempted to turn it off but could not disengage the gears, so he yelled for help. A co-worker heard the commotion and quickly shut the machine off.

Rescue workers had to dismantle the drive mechanism to reverse the mixing blades in order to extricate the victim. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

Investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Develop, implement and enforce a written safety program and train employees in the recognition of hazards and methods to control such hazards.
- Conduct and document regular safety meetings.
- Ensure that equipment is operated according to the manufacturer’s specified procedures.
- Assign safety responsibilities to a competent person at each jobsite.
- Establish basic elements of a lockout/tagout program.
- Assure all warning labels on the equipment are clearly visible and equipment is properly maintained.

Investigators also recommended that manufacturers should:

- Install a safety switch so that the engine cuts off when the guard is disconnected or removed from the drum guard lifter.
- Install an engine kill switch on the machine.