Tree Harvester Self-Starts, Killing Worker

Prince Edward Island occupational health and safety inspectors are trying to determine how a tree harvester with no one at the controls started up and killed a worker who became caught in its jaws.

The victim, 34-year-old Kenneth Duffenais, had been reaching for a branch when the machine suddenly became activated, pinning him. Reportedly he walked away after being released, but died later in hospital. A government OHS spokesman told Safe Supervisor that tree harvesting machines have interlock switches to de-power the cutting heads on their booms when the operator is out of the cab. Investigators are trying to determine what went wrong in this case.