

ACCIDENT ALERT

Arm amputated by timber trimming saw

A 40-year-old employee at the Pinex Timber Products plant at Putaruru had his left arm amputated when he fell across a conveyor chain and was drawn into a trimming saw.

Timber trimmed by goose saw

The accident occurred in the bin sorting area. Timber of varying sizes is put on a lug conveyor, carried round a 90° bend and dropped on to another lug conveyor where the ends are trimmed off by a goose saw. The timber is then forced to the other side of the lug conveyor by a flat conveyor belt where the other ends are trimmed.

The employee was working at the first trimming station,

correctly positioned for the saw blade and to remove damaged lengths.

All the machinery stopped

The first indication something was wrong was when all the machinery stopped. The employee was found tangled in the trimming saw. Emergency services were called and the victim was transferred to hospital by air ambulance.

His left arm was severed from the shoulder. His chest was opened up by the saw teeth to within 5mm of his heart and he also received facial injuries.

May have had blackout

OSH inspector Dennis Shaw who investigated the accident says it is unclear how the employee fell across the conveyor and was carried into the saw. He may have had a

blackout as an after-effect of a recent bout of flu. No other contributing cause of the accident could be found.

The employee was wearing overalls over street clothes. Floors were dry and not slippery. Lighting was good and there was not much timber on the conveyor.

Steel barrier erected

The investigation found no blame for the accident could be attached to the company. The operation does not normally require any person to work in close proximity to the saw, which is guarded to the maximum extent possible. The company could not reasonably have anticipated the possibility of a person collapsing at the work station and being carried along by the conveyor.

However, at the inspector's suggestion, the company immediately erected a steel barrier (pictured) to create a physical barrier between the worker and the lug conveyor.



approximately 1.5 metres from the saw. His job was to ensure the timber lengths were

