



Bakery worker's hand crushed in a french stick moulder



INCIDENT

A bakery worker was hand-feeding a large 1.8kg head of dough into the machine. This was not in accordance with the designed purpose of the machine, but it was routine to flatten large heads of dough by this method for use in a bun divider moulder. The victim's hand stuck to the dough, and was drawn into the rollers with it. The worker could not think clearly, and was unable to take any action other than trying to pull her hand free. Another worker activated the emergency stop but this was not immediate and so severe crushing still resulted.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The machine was fitted with an emergency stop button, and an emergency stop lever, but lacked sufficient guarding to prevent a person reaching the hazardous rollers. It is unclear at this stage whether additional guarding was available at the time of purchase, but it has been established that, at the time of the accident, additional guarding was available through the supplier.

INVESTIGATION

The incident is being investigated by the Department of Labour. It is already apparent that the emergency stop button and lever were not sufficient to prevent serious harm. The accident demonstrates that employers should not assume that such devices are sufficient to prevent serious harm where isolation of the hazard is reasonably practicable.

GUIDANCE

Employers should take all practicable steps to ensure that it is not possible to contact the inward running rollers while the machine is operating.

Employers should check with their supplier to see if retrofit guarding is available. In the case that a retrofit is not available then a custom guard should be fitted or the machine replaced or otherwise retired from use.

A range of options are available for guarding, including:

- A longer chute, or a chute with a bend, that is designed to prevent any person from reaching the hazard;
- An interlocked gate on the chute that prevents the rollers from operating while open;
- A captive drawer.

Employers are advised to consult with a person with expertise in machine guarding to ensure that the most appropriate solution is implemented and to ensure that expensive mistakes are not made.

The Department of Labour has further guidance materials available about machine guarding on its website: www.dol.govt.nz

WHICH INDUSTRIES/SECTORS OR MATTERS WILL THIS INFORMATION BE RELEVANT TO?

- Food Manufacturing
- Bakeries
- Supermarkets

Note: This material has been prepared using the best information available to the Department of Labour at the time of publication. Information may change over time and it may be necessary for you to obtain an update. This material is also only intended to provide general advice and does not constitute legal advice. You should make your own judgement about action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with your workplace health and safety obligations under the law.

