Bakery Operation Safety Fatality File



Bakery owner died when he was caught by rotating mixer arm and pulled inside

SINGAPORE – A bakery owner who died on Monday (June 25) in a workplace accident was operating an industrial gas-heated cooking mixer to prepare bean paste when he was caught by the rotating mixer arm and pulled into the machine.

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) told The Straits Times on Tuesday that Mr. Ng Sew Kuang, 73, was later extricated and pronounced dead at the scene.

It added: “MOM has stopped all manufacturing works and is currently investigating the incident.”

Family members at the wake for Mr. Ng, held near the bakery at Block 17 Bedok South Road, declined to speak to reporters.

The shop, Ng Kian Seng Confectionery, is more than 70 years old and was started by Mr. Ng’s paternal grandfather. It is known for its traditional goodies, such as tau sar piah and wife cakes.

A bakery worker had said on Monday that no one had been around Mr. Ng when the accident occurred and staff were alerted that something was wrong only by a burning smell coming from the machine.

Industrial bakers told The Straits Times there can be multiple hazards in the kitchen. Madam Anna Tan, 60, the owner of bakery 51 fiveone degrees, said the metal covering of her flour-kneading machine must be put on top of the mixing bowl to prevent the baker’s hands from being trapped inside and damaged by the beater.

Workers who noticed a burning smell were shocked to find Mr. Ng Sew Kuang in the machine.

Mr. Henry Ng, 38, chef and owner of Bread & Hearth, said that one has to be aware of and mitigate against specific potential hazards. He added that no one should work alone in the pantry, and everyone must always don proper protective equipment.

With a past career focusing on safety, including as a combat technician with the Republic of Singapore Navy, Mr Ng said: “I learnt that safety should be part of our DNA.”

He said safety should not be enforced through penalties but inculcated during work induction programmes, and even earlier, during one’s school years and childhood.

He said: “Our family awaits our return after work every day, thus workplace safety is number one for us.”