Die Setting Safety Fatality File



Die-Setter Death

A 51-year-old male die-setter (the victim) at a plastic molding company sustained fatal crushing injuries when he apparently entered a plastic blow-molding machine to perform minor maintenance. The victim had relieved the machine operator for a scheduled break. At approximately 6:15 a.m. the victim entered the machine?s enclosed press area, possibly to make a minor adjustment. As the victim entered the machine, he crossed through the machine?s light curtain safety system causing the machine to cycle. The victim was crushed as the machine?s press plates came together to mold a new part. A co-worker found the victim and summoned a supervisor. The injuries from the incident were massive and first aid was not administered. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

The machine involved in this incident was a plastic blow molding machine set up to produce small plastic containers. The process begins as hot plastic is extruded from above. It is then pressed between two press plates on which the mold halves, known as dies, are mounted. After the dies are pressed together, air is blown into the plastic, forming it to the inside shape of the mold. The dies were approximately 4-feet above the floor. The machine occasionally requires minor adjustments to the air injection system for proper production. Adjustments were normally made by using a small hex-key wrench. This was to be done only after the machine had been powered down by the foreman or die-setter.