Experienced Maintenance Worker Crushed To Death



A machine at a steel foundry was found to be jammed in the “up” position and could not be lowered. The plant maintenance mechanic, who was an experienced and careful worker, was called to repair it. Some time later, he was found trapped between two machines and crushed to death.

The machines had recently been changed in design, necessitating more repairs than before. The pneumatically-operated machine was jammed in the “up” position because of an air line leak, and the air had to be left on during inspection to find the leak. Because of the air pressure, the jam suddenly gave way and the machine came down. Crossbars which were recently installed caught the victim and pulled him in between the two machines, where he died.

Training must be continual for experienced employees as well as new workers. A change in equipment could easily mean a change in procedure, and workers must be aware of any new hazards. This fatality points to a lack of understanding of the procedures for locking out and blocking out energy sources such as compressed air. The changes in the design of the machine also called for a review of procedures with all operating and maintenance workers. The procedure review should have included the hazards and the precautions to take.