Pneumatic Door Crushes Mechanic



A maintenance mechanic suffocated when his chest was squeezed between the rear of a vacuum cooler tube and the tube’s door.

His foreman, working for a produce wholesaler, had asked the victim to see if replaced valves were operating properly. A pneumatic valve raised and lowered the tube’s 2,000-pound (907-kilogram) door. Using the valve’s control, the victim partially raised the door. An air line on the pneumatic valve later blew off, lowering the door.

The foreman heard the rush of air and found the victim pinned. The foreman handheld the air line on the valve and raised the door, allowing the victim to fall to the floor. Co-workers started cardiopulmonary resuscitation, but at the hospital he was pronounced dead.

Evidence suggests that either the victim did not fully tighten a clamp, or he connected it improperly. Investigators found an open can of adhesive and a putty knife, indicating the victim had decided to repair a seal.

Are there any caught-between hazards in your workplace? Be sure to follow standard operating procedures to avoid such accidents.