Technician Safety: Drones, Maintenance Robots and Human Interaction Fatality File



Maintenance Worker Is Struck and Killed by Robot

A maintenance worker was servicing a robotic drilling and tapping machine inside an automated work area. The task required the worker to be close to the robot’s operating zone, but the system had not been fully isolated or secured. While the worker was focused on the maintenance activity, the robotic arm suddenly activated, moving within its programmed path without warning.

The worker was struck by the robot with significant force, leaving no time to react or escape. The impact caused fatal injuries at the scene. The investigation found that proper energy control procedures and safeguards were not in place or not followed, allowing the robot to cycle unexpectedly during maintenance. This incident highlights how quickly automated equipment can become deadly when lockout, guarding, and verification steps are missed.

Source: https://www.osha.gov