Worker Killed after Entanglement with Rotating Shaft



A department of public works employee was killed when his sweatshirt became entangled around an unguarded Powered Take Off (PTO) shaft on a salt truck. The DPW mechanical crew repaired the bed chain on the vehicle prior to the incident but returned the truck to service without installing the guard that covered the shaft. It appeared that when the victim walked to the rear of the truck to check the salt spreader, his orange safety sweatshirt was caught by the rotating shaft stub. The victim was found entangled by a co-worker and transported to a hospital by EMS where he was pronounced dead.

This image shows a pair of coveralls stuffed with straw and demonstrates the power of a rotating PTO shaft and what can happen when loose clothing, the hood on a sweatshirt or coat, or anything else gets up in that rotation. Operating at full speed, the rotating PTO and driveline could wrap 7 FEET of the hood string around the shaft in 1 SECOND!

It’s a shocking way to see that the DPW worker didn’t have a chance against the force and speed of the PTO.



Remind workers of ways to prevent these types of injuries and deaths:

1. Service equipment following manufacturer’s instructions.
2. Only use equipment when manufacturer’s guards or an adequate replacement guard is in place and operational.
3. Inspect all safety guards before operating equipment.
4. Never remove machine guards while equipment is energized or can potentially become energized.
5. Never alter machine guards without manufacturer’s approval.
6. De-energize and lock-out equipment’s energy before removing guard to service equipment and always replace guards after servicing equipment.
7. Don’t wear loose clothing or jewelry and keep hair tight.