Garbage Truck Driver Killed by Compactor Mechanism

March, 2019 OSKALOOSA, Iowa (AP) — A garbage truck driver was killed when he got caught by his truck’s compactor mechanism. The driver had stopped the truck on the rural road, climbed up the frame to a spot between the cab top and the compactor and then was caught and crushed by the mechanism. Click here for accident link.

The Control of Hazardous Energy (Lock Out – Tag Out) (29 CFR 1910.147) is one of the Top 5 standards cited by OSHA in the waste management and remediation services industry. Failure to do so can easily result in tragic loss of life. In man vs. machinery, the machinery always wins.

There are several common excuses employees cite for not adhering to Hazardous Energy Control Procedures/Lock Out – Tag Out (HECP-LOTO):

- Takes too much time
- Done it this way a million times
- Don’t have LOTO devices (locks, tags, etc.)
- Haven’t been hurt yet
- It’s only going to take a minute

Unfortunately, some authorized employees don’t believe HECP-LOTO realize is practical and management does not do a good job of explaining the value of the LOTO program. To solve that problem, management must work closely with front-line employees to allow them to make decisions guided by a firm understanding of hazardous energy control and support them by developing site and equipment-specific procedures that both protect human life and are practical.

Shared Responsibility and Partnership Between Management and Front-Line Employees

Employers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- Drafting, reviewing, updating and enforcing a written HECP-LOTO program
- Identifying employees, machines, equipment and processes included in the program and ensuring that site and equipment-specific procedures are established
- Providing the necessary protective equipment, hardware and training, verifying authorized employees can demonstrate the procedures and monitoring and enforcing the program

Employees are responsible for:

- Assisting in the development of equipment-specific procedures
- Following the procedures that have been developed
- Reporting any problems associated with those procedures, the equipment or the process of LOTO

HECP-LOTO Program – The energy-control procedures must outline the scope, purpose, authorization, rules, and techniques that employees will use to control hazardous energy sources and verify compliance.

General LOTO Steps – Before beginning service or maintenance, the following steps must be accomplished in sequence and according to the specific provisions of equipment/ task-specific energy-control procedure:

1. Prepare for shutdown
2. Shut down the machine
3. Disconnect or isolate the machine from the energy source(s)
4. Apply the lockout or tagout device(s) to the energy-isolating device(s)
5. Release, restrain, or otherwise render safe all potential hazardous stored or residual energy. If a possibility exists for re-accumulation of hazardous energy, regularly verify during the service and maintenance that such energy has not reaccumulated to hazardous levels
6. Verify the isolation and de-energization of the machine

Training – Must ensure that employees understand the purpose, function, and restrictions of the energy-control program. Employers must provide training specific to the needs of “authorized,” “affected,” and “other” employees. Must include documented training by authorized employees demonstrating proper LOTO procedures for all equipment and tasks.

Hazardous energy is dangerous, but it can be controlled. Following proper HECP-LOTO procedures ensures that workers are safe when working on trucks, equipment and machinery.