Fatal 5 - Worker suffers serious brain damage whilst attempting to clean pan-mixer

WHAT HAPPENED

A worker at a steel works suffered serious head injuries after being hit in the face with a scaffold pole, causing him to fall backwards. As a result, he sustained permanent brain damage.

An investigation established that he had been preparing to start a paddle mixer to mix refractory materials. The paddle mixer door would not open as hard concrete had built around it. Using a scaffold pole, one of the worker's colleagues managed to open the door. This caused the pole to spin which then hit the worker in the face with such force that he was thrown backwards, hitting his head and losing consciousness. As a result, he broke his jaw and suffered permanent brain damage.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation found that the company had provided an unguarded mixer for their contractor's employees to use and that the mixer's door regularly jammed. The company also failed to ensure that there was a safe system of work in place to release the mixer's door.

The investigation also found that as the mixer was unguarded, workers were able to develop and adopt an unsafe system of work to release the door, which ultimately resulted in the worker's injuries. The company also failed to supervise workers that were using the mixer at its site.

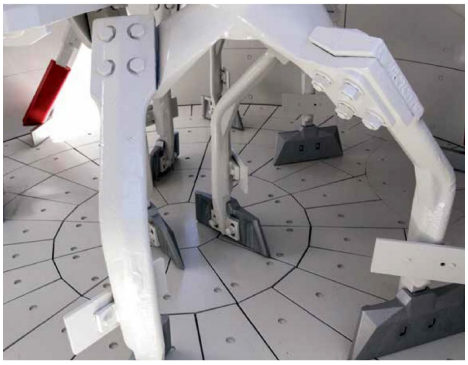
The company was fined £120,000 and ordered to pay costs of over £14,000.

HSE inspector said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by implementing suitable control measures and safe working practices.

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

-
- Ensure appropriate guarding is in place
- Ensure that safe systems of work are adopted
- Ensure their is adequate supervision to ensure they are followed.

MPA has published a 'Guide to Cleaning Concrete Pan Mixers' which deals with the principal safety and health hazards associated with cleaning this type of machinery, including crushing injuries caused by the rotating paddles. Following this guidance could eliminate accidents of this type.



Mineral Products Association

Guide to Cleaning Concrete Pan Mixers

In addition, HSE have published a research report that users of static concrete mixers might wish to read since it deals with alternative methods for control of harmful noise and Hand-arm vibration exposures whilst cleaning mixers and is useful to read alongside the MPA Guidance. RR1193: Static concrete mixer cleaning Establishing alternative methods for control of harmful noise and hand-arm vibration exposures (hse.gov.uk)

LOCATION:	**OTHER**	**ALERT STATUS:**	**Normal**
ACTIVITY:	**MAINTENANCE & HOUSEKEEPING**	**DATE ISSUED:**	**26/07/2023 13:29:24**
SUB ACTIVITY:	**MIXERS**	**INCIDENT No:**	**03652**