Bypassed Switch Cost Worker His Life, Employer $200,000

The owners of a bottle depot recycling business and the company supervisor said they had no knowledge that a safety switch on a cardboard baler had been bypassed. However, that didn’t prevent the company from being fined $200,000 for failing to ensure that equipment was properly maintained.

The Bottle Bin Bottle Depot in Edmonton, AB, was charged after a worker became caught in a baler and died from massive head injuries in summer 2003. An Edmonton courtroom heard late last year that a safety gate should have prevented operation of the machine when the gate was raised. But that safety feature had been bypassed.

Worker Hardeep Mann, 27, became caught between a rising platen and the bottom of a gate. The owner of the company reportedly said he had no idea the switch had been bypassed and assumed that the employee’s negligence resulted in his death.