Electric Eye Triggers Fatal Move



A sawmill employee was operating an automated stacker when he noticed a board out of place on the top of the bundle of lumber. He left his work station and went to the stack to try to straighten the board. He did not lock out the controls or energy sources for the equipment before he attempted the adjustment. He put himself in a position between the stack of lumber and a steel beam. Then he accidentally tripped the electric eye which was supposed to sense when the stack was complete and ready to move. Rollers began to move, advancing the stack. The operator was slammed into the steel beam. He died of head and neck injuries.

Lockout policies are intended to prevent fatalities such as these. Before attempting to repair or adjust moving equipment, you must shut it off and lock out all energy sources according to a strict set of procedures. Equipment activated by electronic sensors or directed by computers can move unexpectedly, triggered by movement or following a complex computer program. If you work around robots, automated equipment or any machinery be aware of the danger zones and stay out of them. Follow all safe procedures including equipment guarding and lockout.