

**Case 170. 46-year-old female finish “floor man” died when several 2-foot 5/8-inch diameter, 29-foot long steel bars landed on her back while she was leaning over bar stock and reaching in to turn off a pneumatic valve connected to the air hose to banding equipment.**

A 46-year-old female finish “floor man” died when several 2-foot 5/8-inch diameter, 29-foot long steel bars landed on her back while she was leaning over bar stock and reaching in to turn off a pneumatic valve connected to the air hose to banding equipment. The steel bars exited the machine and rolled down an incline, stopping against “fingers.” The “fingers” then dropped, which allowed the bars to drop into a j-shaped holder (horn). When 50 bars were in the horn, they were strapped to a spreader suspended under a crane and raised out of the horn. A pneumatic tension tool was used to tighten metal strapping and a pneumatic clamp tool was used to secure the metal strapping. After the bars were secured the next machine cycle was activated by hitting the machine’s reset button. The decedent had strapped and secured the 50 bars to the spreader and had activated the machine to begin the next cycle. The male coupler for the air hose connection to the pneumatic tension tool had broken and the airline was snaking back and forth across the floor. To reach the air valve to shut off the tension tool’s air supply, the decedent was required to bend and reach over 10 bars already in the horn. The 10 pieces of steel had a surface area of 13 inches wide. The decedent also had an additional reach of 18 inches to the machine and air valve, which was located six inches above the floor. While reaching in, the machine cycled and dropped three steel bars onto the decedent’s back. Another plant employee found the decedent. While employees attempted to remove the bars from the decedent’s back, 911 was called. Emergency responders arrived and began resuscitative efforts. The decedent was transported to a local hospital where she was declared dead.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious and Other-than-Serious citations, and a Safety Recommendation at the conclusion of their investigation:

**SERIOUS:**

**METALWORKING MACHINERY, PART 26, RULE 2617(3).**

Provide machine stop device within reach of operator’s position.

No emergency stop at workstation, remotely located from the machine controls and roll down controls.

**SERIOUS:**

**HAND AND PORTABLE POWERED TOOLS, PART 38, RULE 3822(2).**

Remove defective tool from service.

Employees not performing daily visual inspection of portable powered tools to include couplers, pneumatic portable tool.

**SERIOUS:**

**HAND AND PORTABLE POWERED TOOLS, PART 38, RULE 3811(b).**  
Maintain hand and portable power tools free of defects.

Coupler to pneumatic tool broke, pneumatic tension tool.

**OTHER-THAN-SERIOUS:**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS, PART 1, RULE 33(3).**  
Identify each machine control as to its function

Roll down controls on machine not labeled.

**SAFETY RECOMMENDATION:** Move location of the air supply line shut off valve for the pneumatic tool air hoses from underneath and behind the horns at the machine to a location closer to the operator work area.