

Case 176. 18-year-old employee of an automatic car wash died when he became entangled in the power washing machinery.

An 18-year-old male employee of an automatic car wash died when he became entangled in the power washing machinery. The decedent was in the process of closing the car wash for the night when a vehicle, which had previously been washed, returned to be re-washed. The customer washed down the front of the vehicle with a portable power washer, and then threw the power washer's hose and gun into the car wash building. After the customer entered the vehicle, the decedent activated the car wash and the vehicle was moved via conveyor through the car wash. The first wash area had two vertical rotating brushes, one located on each side of the vehicle. The brushes measured 6-feet 4-inches high and approximately 30 inches in diameter. The bristles of the revolving brushes were composed of a foam type material. The portable power wash unit was located near the brush that cleaned the passenger side of the vehicle. After the vehicle proceeded through the first set of brushes, the decedent retrieved the power wash unit. As he was moving the power wash unit, the power washer's hose became entangled in the passenger side rotating brush. The hose wrapped around the decedent's ankle and pulled him into the rotating brush. Both brushes continued to spin until the wash cycle was completed. Another customer who, upon seeing the lights of the car wash still on, entered the car wash to have his car washed and discovered the decedent. EMS arrived and pronounced him dead at the scene. He had suffered multiple fractures of his skull.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious and Other-Than-Serious citations:

SERIOUS:

THE CONTROL OF HAZARDOUS ENERGY SOURCES, PART 85, RULE 1910.147(c)(4)(i) ADOPTED BY RULE 8502.

Develop, document and utilize procedures for the control of potentially hazardous energy when employees are engaged in service or maintenance of machines or equipment where unexpected energization, start-up or release of stored energy could occur and cause injury.

No written lockout procedures, employees only required to depress emergency stops buttons of car wash control panel prior to entering car wash, to begin end of night power wash down of interior of car was during closing of car wash.

SERIOUS:

THE CONTROL OF HAZARDOUS ENERGY SOURCES, PART 85, RULE 1910.147(c)(7)(i)(a) ADOPTED BY RULE 8502.

Provide training to each authorized employee on the recognition of applicable hazardous energy sources, the type and magnitude of the energy available in the workplace, and the methods and means necessary for energy isolation and control.

No training.

OTHER-THAN-SERIOUS:

ACCIDENT PREVENTION SIGNS AND TAGS, PART 37, RULE 3713(1).

A caution sign shall be used to warn of potential hazards or to caution against an unsafe practice.

No caution signs posted at access points to interior of car wash to warn employees to potential danger of revolving equipment, vehicle entrance and exit opening and inside of exit door.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division also issued the following Safety and Health Recommendations:

1. Install a lockable main disconnect on the side of the master car wash control panel, inside of the control room that de-energizes all equipment inside of the car wash, except lights and electrical outlets.
2. Install a painted yellow warning line around the perimeter of unrestricted vehicle entrance and vehicle exit points.