

Case 304. 46-year-old foreman at a plastic recycling facility died when his torso was crushed by the platens of a closing horizontal expansion molding press.

A 46-year-old male foreman at a plastic recycling facility died when his torso was crushed by the platens of a closing horizontal expansion molding press. The press operator requested the decedent to come to the area because parts were sticking in the mold. He reached into the open die area to remove and check parts. While doing so, the press, which was running in automatic mode, cycled and closed on him. He could not be removed because the press was in auto-cycle mode. Another employee removed the rear hydraulic line from the press and pried the platens open with a wrench. The press's safety interlock on the front gate was taped off with duct tape at two areas and the rear gate safety interlock was tied up with a shoe string. The back gate on this press was also open and would not close due to lines going into the die from the outside. The front gate was observed to be fully opened and due to rust, it was hard to slide open/shut, and per MIOSHA interviews with employees, operated in this condition for some time. Emergency response was called and was declared dead at the scene.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Willfull Serious citation at the conclusion of its investigation.

WILLFUL SERIOUS: PLASTIC MOLDING, PART 62, RULE 6235(5):

A custom expansion block machine was not provided with an interlocked gate across the mold parting line or by a two-hand control device:

Safety gates missing and safety interlock of gate taped up in a nonfunctioning position so machine would cycle with gate open.