

Hazard Alert

Pulp and paper workers face increased risk of falling into dry end pulp beater

Risk workers face

Workers in pulp and paper industries face the hazard of falling into the dry end pulp beater. During normal operation of pulp and paper machinery, when everything is running well, the risk of injury is typically low since human intervention is not required.

Problems arise when there is a breakdown of equipment and maintenance is required, or when there is a process upset, especially at the area around near the outlet of the pulp dryer – typically known as the dry end beater or pulper.

As the 14'- to 16'-wide pulp sheet exits the dryer, it's directed into the dry end beater where it's constantly agitated at temperatures around 150 degrees Fahrenheit. While pulp sheet travels into the beater, the crew prepares for its conveyance to a Cooler or Layboy.

Under normal operating situations, the guardrail around the dry end pulp beater prevents workers from falling into the machinery.

How a fall into machinery could happen

The problem exists when there is a process upset and the pulp sheet falls on the floor in front of the dry-end beater and begins to pile up.

If there are any problems getting the full-width sheet into the dry end beater, the sheet will start to pile up on the floor, building up in volume and height in front of the beater, causing operational problems.

To reduce the height of the pulp sheet building up on the floor, workers have been known to climb up and jump on the sheet to try to compress the pile height, which may be approaching the height of the mid- or top guardrail. And as the height of the paper pile starts to rise above the guardrail, workers risk falling into machinery and being severely injured or killed.

Prevention using guardrails, procedures, communication, and training

Employers must have procedures or work instructions in place to prevent unsafe work practices, especially around dangerous machinery. With a legal duty to protect workers, organizations must communicate and instruct their workers on proper procedure, and enforce safe work around machinery, including a dry-end pulp beater.



Guardrails are a passive form of protection to keep workers at a safe distance from hazards, such as:

- Falling from a height
- Falling into operating machinery
- Falling into water or other liquid
- Falling into or onto a hazardous substance or object
- Falling through an opening in a work surface

Employers and workers must be mindful of process problems at the dry-end pulp beater, and ensure workers remain protected by the guardrail, and are prevented from falling into machinery.

For more information, contact your local WSN Health and Safety Specialist

workplacesafetynorth.ca/consulting/findyourspecialist