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Isolating Rotary Dairy Machinery



Details

A dairy worker was attempting to get a fully-loaded rotary milking platform moving. It had stopped revolving because of a problem with the drive mechanism.

The worker, believing the drive mechanism was electrically isolated, began to make repairs. However, the platform unexpectedly began moving — which resulted in the machinery amputating one of the worker's fingers.

Contributing Factors

An investigation into this accident revealed that:

- the worker had pulled the platform perimeter lanyard and opened the cow safety gate. He knew the lanyard had a reset function and assumed it would isolate the drive mechanism
- however, the cow safety gate did not have this feature. Therefore, when the worker pulled the platform perimeter lanyard and opened the cow safety gate, only the circuit on the cow safety gate was opened. The lanyard did not open the drive circuit
- cows can become restless when confined in a rotary stall if there is no movement. In this particular incident, a restless cow actually moved the gate. This closed the circuit and restarted the drive mechanism.


see over...

Recommendations

- Power must be correctly isolated before gaining access to any machinery.
- Full isolation must be achieved by opening all circuits, which must be locked off and tagged out.
- All workers must be trained in the isolation procedures, and fully understand them.

If you would like further information contact Workplace Standards Tasmania on:
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Schofield', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Don Schofield
Chief Inspector of Industry
Workplace Standards Tasmania
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