

Failure to follow procedure puts workers at risk

A worker isolated three conveyors at a quarry prior to greasing a screen. Once he completed the work, he removed the locks but did not turn the isolation switches off or reset them. The work was completed over the weekend.

On Monday, the plant operator did not complete plant prestart checks, despite completing the pre-start check sheet. When he attempted to start the plant, he received error messages but overrode these and ran the main belt.



When he noticed no material on the belt he investigated to find that the locked-out conveyors had not started, and a considerable amount of material had built up at the transfer point between the feed belt and the isolated conveyors.

Entanglement, including people getting caught in conveyors, is one of the four fatal hazards that results in 80% of fatalities in the extractives sector, both in New Zealand and internationally. The plant operator's actions could have resulted in serious injury or death. We recommend that all sites review fixed plant pre-start procedures to ensure that:

- **No plant is started after maintenance until pre-start checks have been conducted to ensure that all guards have been replaced, locks are removed, isolation switches reset and that the plant is safe to operate.**
- **Risk assessments are completed on all non-routine tasks to ensure that hazards are identified, risks assessed, and effective controls are put in place.**
- **Regular workplace inspections are conducted to ensure that risk controls are in place and are effective.**
- **All workers are trained, and regularly re-trained, in isolation and lock-out procedures.**

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe.

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