



## Health, Safety & Environment Department

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# Safety Alert

## Fatality At Tire Plant

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On January 16th, an employee of a tire manufacturer was fatally injured when a slab loader fell on top of him. The loader was not operating and was not being used at the time.

### **Preliminary results of an investigation by the USW have determined:**

Over the years (the loader has been in this position from 20 to 40 years) the loader has been bumped by forklifts placing pallets of rubber to be fed into the breakdown mill. As well the mill is used to rerun scrap rubber fed into the side opposite of the loader. The scrap piles also bump the loader as they are fed into the mill.

It appears that the welds/metal fatigued over the years from the strain of the loader being bumped. One side apparently let go and the weight strain on the remaining bracket was too much and it let go also, nearly simultaneously.

### **Lessons Learned**

- The brackets should have been of a different design (engineered) that would have handled the stress and strain better.
- The need to examine them for fatigue was not considered.
- There was no redundant support system (safety chains) to prevent the loader from falling if one of the brackets failed.

### **Recommendations**

- Temporary support legs have been placed under the front of the existing loaders until the support brackets can be examined and modified. Support chains should be applied to all corners as a back up in case of support failure.
- If you have loaders, or any suspended conveyor systems, you are encouraged to use a non-destructive testing means to determine the integrity of all support welds and install a redundant support system, like safety chains, which have been engineered for load and shock.