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Safety Alert

Fatality At Tire Plant

Bias Cutter Wind-Up Unit

On February 3, 2007, Jason Conley, a bias cutter operator was fatally injured when he was caught by and pulled into a wind-up unit at Goodyear in Union City, TN.

Preliminary results of an investigation by the USW indicates the following

The bias cutter had been down for approximately one hour because no A-Frame units were available for the wind-up. When an A-Frame became available, Brother Conley began the set-up and was changing a liner roll to restart production on the equipment.

Through the course of the initial investigation, it was concluded that the set-up was performed in the automatic mode. The wind-up has been designed for set-up to be done in the manual mode, using a jog button to turn the drum. However, workers indicate that it is known and common practice for the set-up to be performed in the automatic mode by some operators.

Apparently, Brother Conley's hand or hands were caught by the liner/drum during the set-up and he was pulled into the nip point. His body wrapped around the drum and it continued to rotate a few times before the electric drive motor kicked-out.

At some point after he was trapped (estimated about five minutes), other operators saw him and initiated rescue procedures. Brother Conley was transported to local medical facilities, then to regional medical facilities. He died on Sunday, February 4th.

Recommendations

- Wind-up guards and safeties should be reviewed. Rubber industry wind-up roll guarding should be reviewed by all local union safety committees to ensure that adequate protection is provided to our members.
- Layout and design of equipment must account for variations in reach and height of operators. Local union safety committees should review layout and design of all equipment.
- Training programs should adequately address safety procedures. Initial and refresher training should be reviewed to make certain that proper procedures are instructed in classroom and on the job settings.