



Cycletime Tips - Automotive

Volume 3: Safety on the Production Floor

Anyone who sets foot on the production floor needs to be aware of the various hazards that might exist. Most people who have worked or spent any amount of time on the floor either have experienced a near miss or have the scars to show for it. Is this the nature of the beast? No! All accidents are avoidable if the necessary precautions are observed.

In the plastics industry, we are faced with the challenge of proper raw material handling. A day doesn't pass without Jim Cardinal and me observing safety issues relating to pellet waste. These pellets, when scattered over the equipment and floor can make for a quick move to the horizontal if we are caught unaware of their presence. Safety might be viewed as a secondary concern with regard to waste. Often think first of lost profits when piles of material are seen on machines, on the floor, and outside of the plant. But, imagine the economic impact if a fellow associate or customer is injured.

Environmental safety is also a concern for facilities that use certain varieties of pellets. Some fish and birds have been proven, through autopsy, to ingest these pellets mistaking them for a free meal. Their deaths cannot necessarily be attributed to the pellets but lethal or not, perceived abuse of our natural resources will continue to draw attention to the entire plastics industry. Lack of attention will undoubtedly result in poor public image and additional regulation.

The safety consideration list goes on and is not only related to pellet handling. Bulging hydraulic lines, oil leaks, electrical hazards, and equipment hazards are at the top of this list and typically require a concerted training effort to inform all associates of their potential existence. Oil spraying out of the hydraulic lines at high pressure can injure humans when it makes contact. Cases have been documented where the oil actually penetrated the skin, resulting in illness. We complain about all of the new machine safety standards, but should we gripe when people are reaching and standing where they shouldn't?

Please make every effort to regularly tour your facility and imagine what might happen to your valued employees and visitors if the unexpected occurs. The skilled labor pool is constricted enough; we don't want to develop an unsafe reputation which will frighten the potential valued worker away.

Bill Fierens
General Polymers Technical Service - Automotive

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