

Worker Burned by Hot-Water Release

Incident Date: August 18, 2014 / Location: Brooks, AB / Industry: Food Processing



AI Teaching Illustration. Shows exposure to a hot-fluid release near a mezzanine. Pipe layout and release zone are schematic; how the cap came off is uncertain.

What Happened

A rendering feeder line had blocked repeatedly. Planned dismantling had not taken place, so a superintendent and supervisor tried flushing it. A new water connection was installed. They added water, steam and air to loosen and move the blockage, then began draining the line.

The supervisor returned to the mezzanine near the cooker while the superintendent watched from below. A cap on the feeder line was removed or dislodged, releasing steam-heated water toward the platform. The supervisor suffered severe burns. Co-workers helped the worker to an emergency shower and medical care. The worker died in hospital 41 days later.

Why This Became Fatal

Hot water escaped from an opening facing the worker's position. Draining had begun, but hazardous heat and fluid remained. The report does not establish whether the cap was removed or dislodged. A blockage can complicate drainage and pressure verification; changing the troubleshooting method requires a fresh assessment.

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What Safe Looks Like

Verify pressure, temperature and drainage before opening a process line.



1 Reassess a Changed Method

Use an approved plan for blockages and piping modifications.

2 Isolate and Verify

Control all sources; verify pressure and safe temperature.

3 Control the Release Area

Use approved drains and containment. Keep people clear and emergency washing facilities accessible.

AI Teaching Illustration. Work paused for verification; piping and isolation are conceptual. **LSR links:** Energy Isolation; Line of Fire.

Investigation Outcome

The investigation was referred to Alberta Justice on April 13, 2016. **Justice did not proceed with charges against the employer** under Alberta OHS legislation. The file closed on September 30, 2016. The report notes that the access cap was welded closed after the incident; that modification is not a general repair recommendation.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Where could a blockage trap hot liquid or pressure after draining starts?
- 2 How do we verify safe pressure and temperature at the actual opening point?
- 3 Who approves a changed flushing method or a new connection to process piping?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse opening the line if its energy state could not be confirmed?

SAFETY COMES FIRST.

Your Right to Refuse – Alberta. You may refuse work you reasonably believe presents an undue hazard: a serious and immediate threat. Promptly report the refusal and reasons to your employer or supervisor. They must investigate. Contact Alberta OHS if unresolved. Take reasonable care not to endanger others. You are protected from reprisal.

Sources: [Alberta OHS investigation F-OHS-072290-0FFID](#), pp. 2-13; summary completed September 30, 2016. [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 19, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

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