

Worker Crushed by Pneumatic Clamp

Incident Date: November 18, 2014 / Location: Calgary, AB / Industry: Construction



AI Teaching Illustration. Conceptual clamp and crush zone before injury. Equipment geometry, positions and movement arrow are simplified.

What Happened

A sewer-lining crew was opening a pneumatic clamp when they realized a cargo ratchet strap still held it closed. The clamp remained engaged at about 100 psi, adding tension to the strap. A supervisor tried unsuccessfully to release it, then sought the operator. Noise and the inflated liner hindered communication.

Unknown to both supervisors, a labourer entered beneath the rear platform and knelt inside the mechanism. The ratchet released on its own. The clamp moved forward, trapping him against the steel frame. The crew provided first aid and called EMS. He died in hospital later that day.

Why This Became Fatal

The tensioned strap was restraining a powered clamp while a worker was inside its movement zone. When the ratchet released, the clamp moved suddenly. Neither supervisor knew the worker had entered. The report describes obstructed sightlines and noise that made communication difficult.

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What Safe Looks Like

Control stored energy before releasing a restraint or entering equipment.



1 Isolate All Energy

Stop and lock out all supplies using the equipment-specific procedure.

2 Release and Verify

Safely control stored pressure and tension; verify isolation before entry.

3 Control Access

Keep everyone out until the equipment is confirmed safe and entry coordinated.

AI Teaching Illustration. Pre-entry hold point; not a complete isolation design. **LSR links:** Energy Isolation; Line of Fire.

Investigation Outcome

An enforcement review was completed on **October 28, 2015**. OHS determined that **prosecution or an administrative penalty was not appropriate** based on the circumstances. The file closed on October 30, 2015. The public report records no employer or supervisor conviction or fine; final approval was signed on November 9, 2015.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Where do we use straps, pins or other restraints that may be holding stored energy?
- 2 How do we safely remove pressure and tension before releasing a restraint?
- 3 Can anyone enter a movement zone without the operator knowing?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse work if isolation or the all-clear was uncertain?

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-079597-0FFID](#), pp. 2-8; summary completed November 2015 (final signature). [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 20, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

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