

Hazard Alert



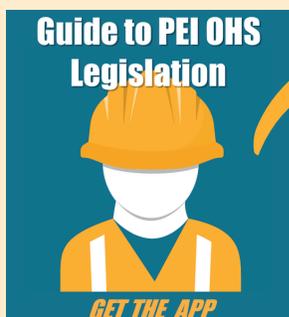
Cardboard Baler

Hazard Summary

In July 2025, a worker was seriously injured while trying to release a jam in the feed chute of a cardboard baler. A cardboard baler is a machine used to compress cardboard into compact bales for easier handling and recycling. The baler's ram, which moves to compress the cardboard, amputated the worker's legs.

Contributing Factors

- **Lack of safety leadership** - The employer and supervisors did not prioritize or promote safe work practices and workers were not encouraged to raise safety concerns or report hazards.
- **Workers did not exercise their right to refuse unsafe work** - Although the workers knew the machine was not functioning properly, they continued to use it despite the hazardous conditions.
- **Lack of equipment maintenance** - The investigation found there was a lack of equipment maintenance and no supporting maintenance records.
- **Broken safety switch**- The machine was able to operate when the door was open because the safety switch, which is meant to stop the machine, was defective.
- **Lack of Lock-out / Tag-out program** - The equipment was not de-energized when a worker went in to fix the blockage inside the baler.



Legislated Requirements

The following legislative requirements under PEI's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act) and its General Regulations (Regs) apply to this situation and to similar machinery-related hazards in the workplace. Employer and worker responsibilities include:

- **OHS Act, Section 12(1)(c)** - To make sure workers are provided with the necessary instruction, training, and supervision to perform work safely.
- **OHS Act, Section 28(1)** - A worker may refuse to perform work if they reasonably believe it poses a danger to their health or safety, or that of another person.
- **Regs, Part 30.3(1)** - To make sure that machinery is operated and maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
- **Regs, Part 30.6(1)** - To make sure that before servicing, repairing, or performing maintenance on equipment, it is rendered inoperative and all potentially hazardous energy sources are locked out in accordance with established procedures.
- **Regs, Part 30.6(3)** - To make sure that any worker who may be required to lockout equipment, or perform maintenance where lockout is not possible, is trained in the safe work procedures and understands the hazards associated with the task.
- **Regs, Part 36.37** - Employers must make sure that any part of an electrical power system requiring work in a de-energized state is fully de-energized, grounded, and its controls tagged and locked to prevent re-energization before work begins.

Recommendations

- Establish clear safety expectations backed by strong leadership, with the employer and its management visibly committed and accountable, while creating a safety culture that empowers all workers to confidently report hazards.
- Inform all workers of their three basic rights:
 - The right to know about workplace hazards.
 - The right to participate in workplace health and safety decisions.
 - The right to refuse unsafe work.
- Make sure workers understand the safe operating procedures which are found in the operator's manual provided by the equipment manufacturer.
- Establish and enforce a Lock-out/Tag-out procedure to control hazardous energy.
- Make sure all emergency stop devices are easy to access.
- Conduct regular equipment maintenance and inspections.
- Provide leadership training to promote accountability and safety oversight.