

Dear Sir

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION FROM HSE FOR USERS OF HAND-FED PLATEN PRESSES – PLEASE READ AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION.

What is the problem?

Two operators have been killed in the UK in the last four years on large hand-fed platens. In both cases the machines were being used in the dwell (timer) mode, the platens were not isolated and the safety devices failed to protect the operators. HSE is aware of three similar fatalities in other countries in the same period.

HSE investigations show that operators are more likely to reach and / or climb between the platens on larger machines. Current guarding standards cannot protect the operator in this situation. Following extensive consultation HSE has now devised a package of measures including improved guarding, which will give operators much better protection.

What do I need to do now?

The enclosed Information Sheet explains the issues you need to consider. Work out which parts apply to you and plan the action you are going to take. This will depend on a number of things including the size of the platen, how it is currently guarded and whether you use dwell or continuous modes. Remember, upgrades to guarding systems may take time to organise but there are some simple steps you can take immediately to reduce the risk to operators. The Information Sheet also covers important issues such as isolation, training and inspection.

Where can I get more information?

More information will be made available in the coming months. The information will be posted on both the printing and paper pages of HSE's website at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/printing/index.htm> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/paper/index.htm>. You can also email your query to platens@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

What will HSE do next?

HSE inspectors will be visiting companies using hand-fed platens from January 2011 onwards. Hand-fed platens are high risk machines and enforcement action will be taken to secure improvements where firms are not already taking appropriate action.

Yours sincerely

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