

MANUFACTURING SAFETY ALERT

Ask Yourself
“Could it happen here?”

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

July 2016 - Sawmill Damaged by Fire When Hog Fuel Ignited
Notice of WSBC incident #: 2016173460016 - Reposted Safety Alert

In the summer, workers attempted to extinguish a smouldering hog fuel fire by dousing it with water from a hose. A piece of burning wood from the fire (firebrand) travelled up an out-feed conveyor. The conveyors were stopped and a worker was sent to extinguish it.

A second fire ignited ten minutes later in the hog fuel pile located near the top of one of the out-feed conveyors. Due to high summer winds, the workers were unable to stop the fire from spreading and another hog fuel conveyor caught fire. The flames spread to several piles of wood waste products and structures.

As a result of these multiple fires, the mill sustained significant damage. No workers were injured.



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

From the Investigation Report:

Cause

- The original fire started as a result of inadequate machine maintenance creating friction between the rotating equipment and trapped wood waste in the hog. Fires in the hog occurred routinely in the summer and were sprayed with water from a hose when detected.

Contributing factors

- Failure to adequately control the accumulation of hog fuel building up inside the hog and piling up between the two conveyor out-feed belts and in the yard contributed to this incident.
- Inadequate fire response procedures and fire response training of the mill workers caused the small fires to spread.

MOST IMPORTANT TAKE AWAY

- Ensure appropriate housekeeping activities occur throughout the year by scheduling regular clean-up operations to minimize accumulation of combustible materials in all areas - including the yard.
- Provide workers with fire response procedures that includes basic skills and training to fight fires and monitor for spreading fires. Ensure they know when to call the fire department to extinguish a fire that is getting out of control.

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