

SAFETY ALERT

Failure to Properly Isolate Conveyor



WHAT HAPPENED?

Staff were working near a conveyor and used an emergency stop button to stop the conveyor from moving while the work was being completed. The conveyor itself was not being worked on however the decision was made to isolate the conveyor for safety reasons.

The emergency stop button was found to be wired incorrectly, operating only when the conveyor control was set to manual and not automatic. As a result the conveyor moved unexpectedly. Luckily no one was harmed.

Although the stop button should have been wired correctly an emergency stop button is not considered an appropriate isolation point. Without an in depth understanding of the control system operation one cannot assume that an emergency stop button will physically isolate all plant. Emergency stop buttons are usually wired into control circuits rather than the motor electrical supplies. The only acceptable isolation for a conveyor is to isolate the electrical supply to the conveyor drive motor.

LEARNINGS

- 🔁 Any isolation of motor driven equipment must be made by isolating the supply circuit to the motor.
- 🔁 Emergency stop buttons and control circuit isolations are not acceptable as isolations for safety.

Safety Alerts are advisory only and contain limited information on an event which has been investigated and reported. The key findings of the investigation are published as a Safety Alert to highlight the key learnings from the event.