#11: Struck by Wood Beam

In mid-2008, a thirty-four year old lead mill wood worker was killed when a laminated teak wood wall cap beam was kicked back out of the 30-inch, wide-belt sander and struck him in the abdomen. The wide-belt sander was purchased used approximately seven years before the accident; it did not come with its operation and maintenance manuals. The company asserted that the equipment was inspected and maintained on a regular basis by someone with 35 plus years of experience in wood working and maintaining wood working equipment. While the wide-belt sander did not have any anti-kickback features, this type of equipment are not known to have kickback issues. On the day of the incident, the victim had been instructed to resize the wood beam by taking off 1/16th inch from the bottom of the wood beam. The victim was taken to the hospital where he passed away from internal injuries.

The investigation did not find any visible defects with the equipment in question, and concluded that the condition and maintenance of the wide-belt sander is a non-contributing cause to the accident. The investigation found that the employer did not have effective work practices that minimized employee exposure to wide-belt sander kick back hazards.

Citations were issued totaling $375.

Recommendations:

1. Adapt and develop operational policies and procedures into written operating instructions and safety procedures for wood working machinery and equipment used.
2. Train and/or retrain their wood shop workers in the employer's written wood working machinery and equipment operating instructions and safety procedures.
3. Train wood shop workers in policies and procedures that minimize the need and/or amount of time workers need to spend at the in-feed side of the wide-belt sander.