

Fatality Alert

On March 22, 2013, An employee was attempting to remove carbon fiber from a roller assembly on a carbon fiber production oven. The removal of problem strands of carbon fiber is usually done by employees when the line is running. The employee was reaching into a portion of the roller assembly with scissors and a utility knife when he became caught in the fiber material and pulled into the roller assembly. The employee suffered several injuries including 3rd degree burns over 40% of his body caused by the 500 degree F. temperatures of the carbon fiber production ovens. The employee was in a burn center hospital for over two months being treated for his injuries and died from infection and organ failure due to the accident.

Significant Factors:

- The employee performed this particular task several times before the accident.
- The roller assembly on the carbon fiber ovens is not guarded so that no part of an employee's body can enter the danger zone.
- The carbon fiber ovens are designed so when an emergency stop button is engaged the end seals on the ovens open, releasing the high temperature heat over the roller assemblies.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that a form of guarding is in place around the roller assembly so that no part of an employee's body can enter the danger zone.
- Train employees on the importance of lock out tag out procedures when performing service or maintenance to equipment.
- Engineer the ovens so that carbon fiber material can be removed while rollers are stopped, and heat from the ovens can safely be dissipated.