MNM Fatal 2006-16

- Fall of Person
- June 28, 2006 (Michigan)
- Iron Ore Operation
- Pellet Plant Utilityman
- 49 years old
- 20 years experience

Overview

The victim was fatally injured when he fell through a roof hatch cover to the preheat grate level 55 feet below. He was using a hose to clean off a build-up of material from the pellet plant unit #1 stack-cap when he stepped on the hatch cover. The hatch cover had corroded over time, causing it to collapse when the victim stepped on it.

Root Cause

Policies and procedures were inadequate. Prior to assigning the task, management failed to complete a risk assessment to identify possible hazards associated with cleaning material build-up on the stack-cap roof area. The location of the roof access cover was not identified and no warning signs were posted on the roof.

Best Practices

- Ensure that covers installed over openings are substantially constructed, inspected frequently and properly maintained.
- Inspect metal structures located in wet or corrosive environments frequently to identify deterioration that may present a safety hazard.
- Evaluate the integrity and support strength of any cover that was not designed as a walkway prior to walking on it.
- Restrict access to covers over openings that were not specifically designed to serve as travelways.
- If the travel surface integrity is unknown or can't be readily confirmed, ALWAYS wear fall protection to be on the safe side.