Incident hay press showing the area where the victim was working when he was struck by the guillotine blade.

**Operator Struck by Hay Press Guillotine Blade**

**SUMMARY**

A 39-year-old hay press operator died when he was struck by the machine’s guillotine blade.

The victim had worked for 1 ½ years for his employer, a grower, processor, and a wholesale seller of hay forage. He worked in the hay processing plant where he operated a hay press that compressed field baled and loose hay into high density bales for shipping.

On the day of the incident, the victim had been operating the hay press as usual. Near the end of his shift, the plant supervisor asked the victim and two other employees to get the machine ready for maintenance. They started cleaning up by manually placing a few bales onto the conveyor, which had been stopped, and pushing them along toward the scale. The victim was responsible for locking out the equipment, but he did not do this.

During normal operation, a conveyor moved hay into the covered area of the scale. When the hay reached the correct weight, a guillotine blade would slice off the section of hay before it was moved along by conveyor to be compressed. The victim crawled into the covered area where the scale was located and started to push a bale through to clear the area. His supervisor and coworkers did not notice him get into the machine. As he was lying on the scale, the steel guillotine blade activated and struck him, resulting in near decapitation.

Incident investigators found out through interviews with employees that the victim had on a number of occasions exposed himself and others to unsafe conditions by not following proper procedures for lock out/tag out of the hay press.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences:

Always follow the machine manufacturer’s operator and safety manual requirements regarding control of hazardous energy before performing cleaning, repairs, adjustments, or any other activity that could put employees at risk of safety hazards.