DO’S & DON’TS: Do Follow Manufacturers’ Instructions for Equipment



When it comes to the machinery and equipment in your workplace, it’s important that you comply with the requirements for such devices in your jurisdiction’s OHS laws. You may also have to comply with any applicable voluntary standards, such as those from the CSA, that have been adopted by the OHS laws. However, there’s another source of safety information you should also comply with but may overlook’the instructions from the manufacturer of the equipment or machinery. These instructions are specific to the operation of that particular make and model of equipment and so provide important information on its safe use. And the OHS laws may specifically require you to comply with manufacturers’ instructions. For example, Sec. 12(d) of Alberta’s OHS Code 2009 says an employer must ensure that equipment and supplies are erected, installed, assembled, started, operated, handled, stored, serviced, tested, adjusted, calibrated, maintained, repaired and dismantled in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications or the specifications certified by a professional engineer.

Look what happened to small family farm in Ontario that ignored the manufacturer’s requirements for a sweep auger located in a dryer bin. One end of the sweep auger was fixed in the centre and the other end moved in an arc across the floor, moving the soy beans to the center. According to the

auger’s operating manual, no one should enter the bin unless the power to the auger was disconnected and locked out. But a worker swept beans into the bin while the auger was rotating. His clothing got tangled in the auger and he was thrown forward into its path. One of his legs got caught under the auger and suffered a laceration and soft tissue damage. The farm pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that the manufacturer’s instructions for safe operation of the auger were complied with and was fined $18,000 [Willow Hawk Farms Inc., ON Govt. News Release, July 30, 2014].