

DOS & DON'TS: [X] Don't Base Safety Measures on Length of Job



Don't base the safety measures or procedures for any given hazard on how long it'll take workers to do a specific job. Even a task that may take mere seconds to complete can expose workers to serious safety hazards. For example, clearing a jam from a piece of machinery may be done very quickly. But if a worker fails to turn off and lock out that equipment before performing this 'quick fix,' he may get caught in the machinery and, say, lose a finger'or even worse.

Look what happened at a manufacturing plant for metal auto parts in Ontario. A supervisor was made aware of a problem with a robot cell. He told a maintenance worker to fix the tooling and overheating electrode in the cell. Thinking the matter could be quickly fixed, the worker entered the robot cell through the light curtain and without locking out power to the robot. While positioned on a railing by the conveyor belt to the left of the tooling, he felt the robot pressing his back. It caused serious and permanent injury.

At trial, the manufacturer was convicted of three safety violations. The court found that maintenance workers were expected to make a judgment call about how to fix the equipment: If it was a 'quick fix,' the practice was *not* to follow LOTO procedures; if it was a longer job, such as an hour, then LOTO procedures would be followed. As a result, the

court fined the manufacturer \$270,000 for the offences [*Matcor Automotive Inc.*, Govt. News Release, Aug. 17, 2016].

Insider Says: For more on protecting workers from injury by robots, see '[How to Comply with Safety Requirements for Industrial Robots.](#)' And for more on LOTO, see '[Machinery & Equipment: Answers to 12 Frequently Asked Questions about LOTO.](#)'?