Explosion at a Wood Pellet Plant Results in $56,000 Fine



An explosion at a wood pellet plant in 2014 injured three workers. An investigation concluded that the company fell short on providing adequate safety information, training and supervision. Workers failed to follow procedures before opening up a dryer door during a routine burner cleaning, including shutting off a combustion fan before the equipment had cooled sufficiently. The facility's production superintendent also had directed a worker to abandon the control room to help with the clean out, leaving no one to monitor as temperatures rose to dangerously high levels. As a result, the explosion was caused by a buildup of gases in the burner, sparked by a combination of residual heat and a sudden inflow of oxygen. Three workers standing outside the dryer door were knocked off their feet and suffered burns. So WorkSafeBC fined the company $56,000 [*Pinnacle Renewable Energy Inc.*, Dec. 22, 2015].