

Steel Company Fined \$75,000 after Worker Is Pinned by Hydraulic Ram



A steel company converts coal to coke in a group of ovens connected by common walls. The coke ovens are filled with coal from the top by a 'charge car,' which automatically connects to the oven by extending a hydraulic ram from the car to make contact with a paddle that controls the aspirator valve. When the operator of the charge car saw that the ram had failed to make contact with the paddle, he asked a co-worker to manually pin the paddle down to engage the aspirator valve. While that worker was pinning the valve, the operator pulled the ram back, which caught and pinned the worker. He lost consciousness for several minutes and sustained fractures, bruises and burns. The steel company pleaded guilty to failing to ensure there was clearance sufficient for the worker's safety from the path of travel of a hydraulic ram and was fined \$75,000 [U.S. Steel Canada Inc./Acier U.S. Canada Inc., Gov't. News Release, April 5, 2016].