Steel Manufacturer Fined $100,000 after Steel Slab Falls from Magnet



A worker at a steel manufacturer’s plant used a crane with an attached electromagnet to pick up a steel slab and direct it through the plant to the back of a truck. The truck driver was standing on the flatbed to help maneuver the slab. But when the slab was in position, it unexpectedly dropped from the electromagnet and fell onto the flatbed, causing the truck driver to fall off the back of the truck onto the concrete floor. He was rushed to the hospital. His critical injury, along with complications that included infection, resulted in an amputation. An investigation found that the electromagnet lost power because it had become unplugged and disconnected from its power outlet. In addition, the night before, the same electromagnetic crane had accidentally become disconnected from its power source, causing a suspended steel lab to detach and fall in the same fashion. But the electromagnet lifting device wasn’t immediately taken out of service. The steel manufacturer pleaded guilty to a safety violation and was fined $100,000 [*Schmolz + Bickenbach Canada Inc.*, Govt. News Release, April 19, 2016].