



HAZARD ALERT

Fatal Incident Involving a Belt Manlift at a Pulp Mill

A USW member was fatally injured after falling from a belt manlift. It appears the victim attempted to mount and ride the descending foot step (platform) when the incident occurred. He was working alone at the time and there were no witnesses. This antiquated equipment is a power-driven endless belt in a tall column running vertically through floor openings. The belt moves in one direction only. The belt has foot steps (platforms) and hand-holds placed every few feet. A worker steps on the attached step and grabs the attached hand-hold to ride up or down from one floor to another.

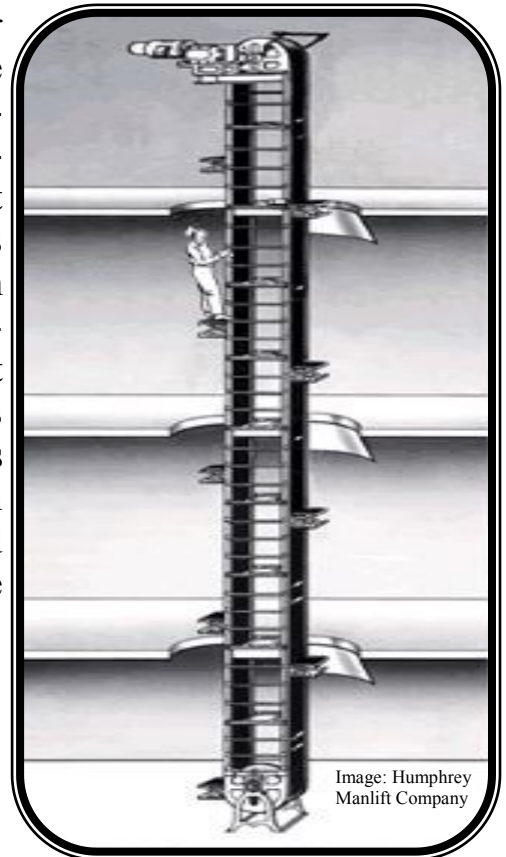


Image: Humphrey Manlift Company

Recommendations to Prevent Recurrence:

- Belt manlifts are antiquated equipment and must be replaced with an inherently safer design for the transportation of personnel, such as permanently installed elevators.
- While inherently safer technology is being installed, it is important to comply with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers A90.1 Safety Standard for Belt Manlifts (<http://files.asme.org/Catalog/Codes/PrintBook/35689.pdf>) and manufacturer's guidelines, while this unsafe technology remains in use.
- Although OSHA has requirements for manlifts (29 CFR 1910.68), they are seriously out-of-date. Furthermore, manlifts installed prior to 1971 do not even have to conform to these outdated rules. However, employers are still required to provide a work environment and working conditions that are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.
- Belt manlifts expose workers to fall hazards. Fatalities associated with manlifts continue to happen in U.S. workplaces. If employers rely only on less effective hazard control measures such as employee training and workers' 'safe behaviors' when working with design-flawed equipment, these hazardous working conditions will continue to result in injury and death.



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This hazard alert is based on an actual incident, and reflects our best understanding of the incident at the time it was written. However, many incidents have multiple causes; this alert may not cover all of them. The purpose of the alert is to illustrate workplace hazards; it is not intended to be a comprehensive report on the incident.