Snapshot Report

# Bandsaw Safety Program – optimising new and old saws

Full Project Title

Project Code
2020-1062

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Date Submitted
11/05/2022

## Project Description

The Australian meat processing sector has an unfortunate history of being one of the more dangerous sectors in Australia where injury count per hours worked is the measure deployed. The industry has developed a bandsaw safety system to reduce the severity of injury and in most cases eliminate injury. Nolan has a quandary with this solution. In order to increase employee health and mental wellbeing and to increase operational efficiency, Nolan 20 years ago invoked self-managed rotational job small working teams. This results in operational staff rotating around the four bandsaws in the boning room. How does Nolan (and staff) manage risks to staff if two bandsaws are the newer risk reduced saws and two remain older saws (as no safe saw models are available for two of the saws) and ensure operations retain the right level of cognitive awareness required for both the old and new saws during the same day.

This project required the installation of two new safety saws and leave two existing saws, for which a safety solution currently does not exist. Both the new and the old saws were fitted with additional ‘in your face’ indication of whether they are the new or the old saw. Staff were evaluated over a period of time as to whether the safety level indicators deployed consciously remind them of the risk level associated with each saw.

## Project Content

This project will evaluate how to operate a meat processing facility with a mixture of newer ‘safe’ saws and older style saws that do not currently have a ‘safer’ alternative model on the market. The outcomes will:
1. Ascertain what is the best approach to alerting an operator as to the type of saw they are using, in a conscious but non-distracting way.
2. Engage/interview operational staff in both the design of the awareness solution and success of implemented solutions as to the effectiveness of the desired outcome.

## Project Outcome

Through trials and data analysis the following results were obtained.

1. The use of virtual signs on a high-risk piece of equipment like a bandsaw created more distraction to the operator. This lowered their concentration levels and as such providing a higher level of risk.
2. By introducing a ‘Safe’ saw into our Boning Room, it lowered the safety culture around the use of Bandsaws. Team members started becoming more complacent and in fact ended up touching the blade more regularly than a conventional saw, albeit the severity of the injury was much less.
3. The manufacturer of the saws has some work to do around the reliability of the Bandsaws and components within.

## Benefit for Industry

Where alternate bandsaws are being used in the same environment – hard signage is recommended to enhance operator awareness around safety aspects of the saw. Increase awareness, across industry, that blade stop technology is only an added level of PPE. Increase awareness, across industry, blade stop technology does not eliminate risk to operators.