

New Press Controls Bring Safety to Old Presses

All across North America and indeed the world, safety concerns continue to rise in prominence and perhaps in no other industry is this more relevant than that of metal stamping.

In the United States alone, power presses on an annual basis are reported to be the cause of 650 worker amputations, based on the most recent data available, which is a totally unacceptable number especially in the case of such irreversible worker injuries.

Many times, the culprits are older and aging power presses which were built in days when the safety of workers was not as paramount. Many power presses still being operated today are decades old and still function effectively from a production perspective. So how do you bring these old work horses up to today's safety standards without breaking the bank?

One of the big differences today is of course technology. Modern chip based micro computing can allow for much more effective and reliable monitoring and control of safety devices and the presses they are guarding. Press Controls with diverse redundancy can now be employed quite cost effectively to provide that one extra layer of worker security which can make all the difference in preventing these tragedies from occurring on such a regular basis.

OSHA in the United States and the CSA / Provincial Labor Ministries in Canada have now developed and introduced safety codes which make the use of these modern technologies mandatory in the immediate future. Business operators who continue to ignore these codes, recommendations and do not develop plans for compliance leave themselves extremely exposed in the case of resulting accidents which will in the end cost them much more than simply bringing their power press equipment up to snuff.

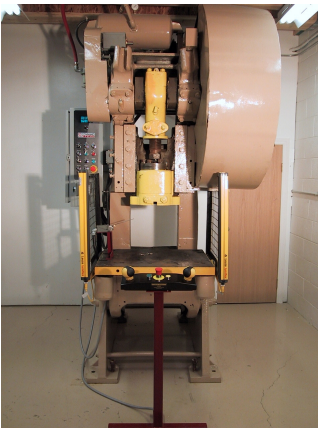
On top of the safety aspects, such Press Control devices can also increase the operational productivity of power press operations. Automated batch counting and operation, simplified error messaging and trouble shooting can allow operators to more quickly understand

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and correct press fault conditions allowing them to get back to production mode sooner than in the past where such total press operations monitoring was not available. Additionally, device-net links from Press Controls can allow the networking of equipment to provide centralized data collection, operations monitoring and die recipe control/updates from PC's operating in the office environment.

Another benefit from such Press Controls is their ability to identify potentially serious mechanical malfunctions in their early stages allowing for less costly preventative maintenance before the occurrence of a major power press breakdown and significant production interruption

One example of such a Press Control is the Command Stamp unit (pictured below installed on a 1960's vintage 80 ton Minster Press) developed by Reflex Integration, a joint venture company of Penmar Automation (1991) and Soft Design Automation (1986). This unit has already been third party verified to meet the CSA Z142-02 standard which becomes mandatory in December 2004.



There is no longer any doubt that with the advent of such flexible and cost effective Power Press solutions that increase worker security and at the same time offer additional benefits from improved operational productivity and mechanical fault monitoring, the time for excuses for not upgrading your power press equipment has now run out.

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