

Trouble in the Truss Construction Shop

Two weeks ago, during a QA truss load test, the truss being tested fragmented along a horizontal axis, causing a large piece of the truss to break part and fall on a hoist operator supporting the test. The hoist operator sustained head injuries and remains in an induced coma in a local hospital. This accident sent shock waves through the Truss Construction Department because the company has heavily invested in a new engineering and manufacturing process to produce a cost-effective truss that has been touted to be on the "cutting edge" of construction technology, especially for low cost housing in overseas markets.

A report by the Safety Officer, QA manager, and engineer verified that the test being conducted pushed the load testing slightly beyond the high threshold of acceptable load-bearing, though the extra load was not expected to cause the truss to fail. In fact, the trusses were advertised to meet "commercial-high" load requirements.

Employees in the engineering shop have been asking if the manufacturing or engineering process is flawed and if the trusses being produced could fail under load.

Company memos have focused on production and more testing at lower thresholds, and members of management are encouraging employees to continue the current production schedule to meet orders for the trusses.

The Sales department is highly concerned that if there is any delay in shipping, customers will pull their orders, which would have a disastrous result on revenues.

Faruch Habib, a production line worker, leaked the details of the accident and test thresholds to the press. Two weeks later, he was terminated for documented poor performance, according to managers.

The company Public Relations department has issued a general statement that the company has taken all action to ensure that this type of workplace accident would not be repeated.