

Unsafe at any (press) speed

Recently, a production manager asked me the following question:

I enjoy reading your Pressman's Toolbox column on a regular basis. The topics you cover really come in hand with my aging Goss Urbanite press.

I've been in the newspaper business for over 21 years (only two years overseeing après / packaging production operation) and am faced with a strong difference of opinion between my operations director and my press manager. The issue is how to safely adjust sock rollers that have been removed and later returned to the press because of cleaning or replacement of sock material. The ops director strongly recommends stopping the press to make the adjustment; the press manager flat-out contends that the press must be moving at run-speed to effectively make an adjustment. I fell like I'm between a rock and a hard place on this one.

What is your recommendation on safely adjusting sock rollers?

My first response was this: Does this press manager still have all his fingers? I absolutely do not believe anyone should adjust ink or water rollers when the press is running. In fact, those who do could be slapped with a fine from OSHA. If the press manager is hurt while adjusting a sock roller, who will be responsible and pay the price for that mistake?

First of all, I would feel sorry for the pressman because he will be permanently disabled. He should be responsible for his own actions, but that's not the way it works. You and your company are responsible for creating an unsafe work environment. And condoning this act is creating an unsafe work environment.

Doing it correctly

The sock roller can be correctly set with the press at a stopped condition. Does it take a little practice to learn to do this? Yes. Does it take a little longer? Yes, it may take a bit longer to adjust the roller while the press is down, but it is the only safe way to adjust the roller. Is it more of a pain to adjust the roller with the press stopped? Yes, but it is only a pain to those pressmen that say they believe they can successfully adjust the roller while the press is running.

The sock roller is adjusted by:

Wetting the sock roller.

- 1) Install the sock roller if not already installed.
- 2) Adjust the sock roller to the water oscillator roller using Mylar slip sheets on each edge of the roller being set (where the image ends at each edge of the plate). The amount of pressure should be a snug pull. The snug pull pressure is generally left up to interpretation by the person setting the sock roller; however, the pull pressure can become standardized by using a pound or ounce scale, with a piece of film attached to the scale's end.
- 3) Adjust the sock roller to the water feed roller. The amount of pressure in this contact area is light wiping contact (see Step 2.)

Safety is one of the most important issues newspapers face today. Whenever a newspaper thinks it is safe and in compliance with OSHA, rest assured OSHA will establish new guidelines and new compliance standards.

Remember: If what you're doing seems unsafe, it probably is.