

# CASE *Study*

## *Frommelt Safety automated barrier improves safety at Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation.*



*The automated Verti-Guard barrier from Frommelt Safety Products protects employees from the hazards of the flexo-folder-gluer machine, yet allows full visibility of production process.*

Anyone familiar with the manufacturing of corrugated containers will recognize the flexo-folder-gluer machine in a facility. Throughout the world, manufacturers utilize the flexo-folder-gluer to print, fold and glue corrugated containers for their customers. While this machine makes the manufacturing process much faster, the moving parts and potential for product jamb-ups make the flexo-folder-gluer a potentially dangerous piece of equipment if not properly guarded.

Steve Douglass, Production Manager for Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin recognized the inherent dangers of the Mini-Martin flexo-folder-gluer in his facility. According to Douglass, "Jamb-ups in the process occur at this area most often, and people are tempted to put their hands into the machine at that point."

The machine was initially guarded with a wire mesh swing gate, which was designed to prevent employees from reaching into the machines. Although the gate was equipped with a limit switch to turn off the machine if the gate was opened, the stored energy in the machine posed a serious threat to employees. In addition,

the metal gate was manually operated and required an individual to swing the door open and closed. Not to mention that it was difficult to see effectively through the mesh to diagnose a problem when jamb-ups occurred.

Douglass discussed this potential problem with his General Manager, John Yoder, as they prepared for a quality inspection of their facility by employees from other Smurfit-Stone facilities. Yoder came across the ideal solution at National Manufacturing Week in Chicago. There he was introduced to the Verti-Guard™ Barrier from Frommelt® Safety Products.

Although Frommelt Safety Products designed automated machine guarding solutions primarily for the robotic welding industry, the clear, hard-panel design appeared to be the ideal solution for Smurfit-Stone's application. The Verti-Guard could be interlocked with their Mini-Martin to ensure that no one interfered with the operation of the machine, and the clear panel made it easy for employees to check the operation of the machine. Finally, the push-button operation meant that the Verti-Guard could be opened and closed quickly and easily, with minimal employee involvement.

Douglass was convinced that the Verti-Guard was the best solution for Smurfit-Stone, however he needed the custom-made device installed prior to his inspection, which was only two weeks away. Frommelt Safety Products responded quickly, and Smurfit-Stone received their Verti-Guard in time for the inspection.

The new Verti-Guard not only helps protect Smurfit-Stone's employees, it protects their bottom line. The improved safety means less risk of a costly workman's compensation claim, and the productivity gains result in lower overall production costs.

Employees have been impressed with the ease of operation of the Verti-Guard, and Douglass is satisfied to know that his employees are now properly protected from a potential hazard. He is confident that he made the right choice with the Verti-Guard. "Everyone has been very pleased with the operation of the Verti-Guard. It is easier to operate than the manual gate, and the simple design will be less maintenance for us in the long-run."



*The Verti-Guard remains closed during the machine's operation, and prevents employee access.*

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