



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

# Weekly Safety Meeting

## Working Safely with Machinery

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, over 1100 workers in the United States were killed last year by contact with equipment or by being caught up in running machinery. That's 20% of all fatalities in the workplace. Over a thousand people killed in ways that could have been prevented.

Cleaning a jammed conveyor, reaching for a wrench, or retrieving a dropped glove are common tasks. Yet, each of these acts can lead to a serious injury. Many injuries occur during equipment maintenance. Sometimes workers try to reach past the guards while trying to service equipment or get caught in power transmissions such as belts, pulleys, running rolls, chains, or sprockets. Other injuries occur when equipment is unguarded or when machinery starts unexpectedly.

If some basic precautions are taken, protecting workers from these injuries can be simple, and inexpensive. Inexpensive physical controls such as machine guards can prevent many injuries. The important thing is that the guards remain in place. Bright, contrasting colors painted on machine guards and points of operation give workers a visual warning and can make it easy to spot missing guards. Good lighting also helps spot dangerous conditions or unguarded machinery.

### **Be Alert Working Around or Operating Machinery:**

**The point of operation:** This is where the work of the machine takes place. It's where the pressing, cutting, punching, and boring takes place. It's a place where no part of the body should be. The point of operation may also produce sparks or fragments that can fly toward the operator. Safety glasses are important for this type of work.

**The power train:** This is where energy is transferred through moving parts like gears, shafts, belts, cables, and hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders. No body parts should be in these areas. Employees should report any missing guards to their supervisor before operating this equipment.

Regular maintenance by experienced workers can make a big difference in preventing equipment jams and in reducing the risk of injury from being caught by or falling into machinery. Employers should establish and train workers to follow safe work practices around machinery and other electrical equipment. The law requires equipment to be turned off and locked out during any maintenance to prevent someone from turning it on unexpectedly.

### **Workers Should Recognize and Understand the Following When Working Around Machinery:**

- The location of machine guards and points of operation;

- The purpose of color-coded machinery alerting workers to hazards and to help pinpoint missing guards;
- The danger of pinch points and importance of guards on in-running rolls, belts, pulleys, chains, and sprockets;
- Established lockout/tagout procedures;
- When machines have been shut down for maintenance or to clear jams;
- That machines remain off while they are shut down for maintenance;
- Electrical safety work practices developed by the company; and
- The importance of keeping machinery clean to prevent equipment jams.

### **Identify All Potential Hazards:**

- Pinch points;
- Objects that can hit you;
- Things you can get caught in;
- Things you can be pushed against;
- Equipment under pressure;
- Contact with electricity or heat;
- Sheer points or compression points; and
- Any other hazards such as chemicals.

Remember, that it is up to each worker to report unsafe pinch points, so that guards can be fabricated or purchased for installation on the equipment. Check your work area for hazards such as unguarded winch drives, chain drives, belts, augers, etc. Most machinery has some type of a pinch point and the only way to make them safe is by adequate guarding, which prohibits entry of fingers, clothing, or hair.

If guards are installed and a part of the machinery, make sure they are all in place before running the equipment. Review the machine carefully after repairs or maintenance has been completed, since guards must be removed for many types of this work.

Don't put ***your life, or someone else's life*** in the hands of a third party who might have removed the guard for maintenance or some other purpose and forgot to re-install it when done. The surest way to safeguard worker hands and fingers is for everyone to stay alert when working around machinery or moving equipment, and to follow established company safety practices and use common sense.

**DON'T GET CAUGHT WITH YOUR GUARD OFF...IT COULD BE DISARMING!!**

