

Machine and Tool Guards

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Overview

In the past decade, machine and tool guarding has improved dramatically. Machine and tool guards serve a dual purpose. Not only do they prevent you from getting caught in the tool, but they protect you from objects that are thrown by the tool. Yet some people continue to ignore the purpose of guards and remove them or tamper with interlocks so the tools will operate faster.

For Discussion

When is it allowable to remove machine and tool guards?

When a machine or tool needs service, adjustment, or repair, guards may be removed. Before removing guards, you **must** be sure the machine or tool is de-energized and locked or tagged out. When the adjustment is finished, make sure the guard is securely replaced and is working properly.

Breakdowns, jammed work, and broken parts sometimes cause us to forget ordinary safety procedures. The second that it takes to reach inside a machine could result in a severed finger. Extreme caution should always be used instead of risky quick-fixes.

What should you do if you see an unguarded machine or tool?

If you ever see a machine or tool without a guard or in any other unsafe condition, report it to your supervisor immediately, regardless of whether it is in your work area or elsewhere. Your action could prevent an injury to the operator or anyone working nearby.

Where should you pay special attention to guards?

- Meshing gears
- In-running rollers
- Reciprocating parts
- Chain and sprocket drives
- Cams and rollers
- Belts and pulleys
- Flywheels
- Cutting or abrasive surfaces
- Cooling fans
- Conveyer systems
- Rotating couplings and shafts
- Hot or overheated parts