

Machine Guarding

Why is Machine Guarding important? 18,000 amputations, lacerations, crushing injuries and approximately 800 deaths occur yearly for workers who operate or maintain machinery. Amputation is often caused by equipment inadequately or completely unguarded.

What do Machine Guards do? Machine guards provide a barrier to protect workers and prevent injuries caused by moving machine parts. Safeguards prevent hands, arms and/or any other body part from making contact with the dangerous component.

Type of Machines that need guards:

- Milling machines
- Presses
- Saws
- Shears, grinders, and slitters
- Roll-forming and roll-bending machines

Machine guards can include:

- *Interlocked* guards shut off or stop moving parts of the machine before a worker can reach into the dangerous area.
- *Fixed* guards are a permanent part of the machine creating a barrier from a certain area or location.
- *Adjustable* guards can accommodate a variety of production operations and can be adjusted to allow a variety of stock to be used.
- Self-adjusting guards provide a barrier by opening and closing according to the size of the stock entering the dangerous area.

Safe Work Practices:

- Do a hazard assessment to review all hazards that may present while using the machinery and performing the task.
- Remove slip, trip, and fall hazards from the areas around the machines
- Make the work area large enough for machine operation and maintenance
- Place machines away from high traffic areas to reduce distraction
- Don't wear jewelry or loose fitting clothing and long hair should be contained to prevent entangling.

Companies must protect workers by providing adequate guards and training. Training should include hazards in the work area, machine-specific hazards, safe work practices, how to use their safeguards and their purpose. Workers should also wear the necessary PPE based on the hazards. Examples include gloves, hearing protection, eye protection or specialized footwear. Safeguards need to be secure and strong to prevent workers from bypassing, removing or tampering with them.

To access the standards or recommendations visit <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/machineguarding/index.html>