

DOS & DON'TS: [û] Adequately Protect Workers when Machine Guards Must Be Removed



All Canadian OHS regulations have requirements for guarding machinery and equipment to protect workers from coming into contact with nip hazards, pinch points, etc. One of the key machine guarding rules is that you should bar workers from removing guards. But sometimes it's *necessary* to remove a guard. For example, the guard may prevent workers from accessing a part of the machinery that's broken or the guard itself may be broken and need to be repaired or replaced. In such circumstances, the OHS regulations permit the removal of guards'provided that alternate safety protections are in place, such as locking out the machinery or using a spotter. If you remove a guard'even for a necessary reason'and let workers continue to use the unguarded machinery without adequate protections, workers could get injured or even killed.

Look what happened in the factory of an Ontario plastic bottle manufacturer. A temporary worker was removing bottles from the end of a blow mould machine. The machine had a moving part that should've been guarded. But the guard had broken and been removed from the machine while it was repaired. Unfortunately, the manufacturer didn't install another guard or implement other safety measures in the meantime. The worker came into contact with the moving machine part and was fatally injured. The manufacturer pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that a

machine with a moving part that could endanger a worker was equipped with a guard to prevent access. The court fined it \$100,000 [[CRS Plastics Ltd.](#), Govt. News Release, Aug. 19, 2015].

Insider Says: The OHS Insider has additional resources on machine guarding, including:

- [Machine guarding requirements under the OHS laws](#)
- [How to choose an appropriate guard](#)
- A [Machine Guarding Checklist](#)
- [How to troubleshoot machinery.](#)