

DOS & DON'TS: [û] Bar Workers from Wearing Jewellery When at Risk of Entanglement



Entanglements are a serious safety hazard in workplaces that use certain kinds of machinery. Workers can get entangled in equipment if their hair, clothes or gloves get caught in rollers, belts, etc. But entanglements can also be caused by a worker's jewellery. For example, a factory worker who'd just gotten engaged was wearing her engagement ring while standing on a raised platform, hanging parts on an overhead conveyor. Her ring got caught on part of the hanger assembly and she was pulled to the edge of the platform. Her ring finger was amputated when she fell off the platform and to the floor.

There are two basic ways to prevent entanglements caused by jewellery and other items. First, you should install appropriate guards on equipment to protect workers from nip hazards, pinch points, etc. Second, you should set rules to address the kinds of items or body parts that could get entangled. For instance, in addition to requiring workers with long hair to wear it tied back or under a hair net or hat, and requiring workers to keep shirts tucked into their pants, you should bar workers from wearing jewellery, including rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings and watches, around designated equipment and when doing so poses a safety hazard. This rule should apply to all workers, both male and female.

Note that you may need to include an exception to this rule for medical alert bracelets or necklaces. To protect workers who must wear such jewellery, require it to be secured closely to the skin with tape or rubber bands, or to have break-away capability in case it does get caught in machinery.

Insider Says: The OHS regulations may also specifically address the hazards posed by wearing jewellery. For example, Sec. 83(2) of Ontario's Industrial Establishments Regulations says, 'Jewellery or clothing that is loose or dangling or rings shall not be worn near any rotating shaft, spindle, gear, belt or other source of entanglement.' So ensure that your jewellery rules are consistent with any similar requirements in your jurisdiction's OHS regulations.