

How to Better Protect Workers Using Machinery & Equipment



Workers who use machinery and equipment, such as presses, saws, conveyors, etc., face many hazards, including pinchpoints, entanglement and electrocution. Employers typically protect workers from these hazards with safety measures such as safe work procedures and machine guards.

But injuries from machinery and equipment are still very common. Some recent examples:

- An Ontario worker's leg was pinched between a moving rack and a mill and broken. His employer pleaded guilty to a machine guarding violation and was fined \$120,000.
- An employer in Manitoba was fined more than \$42,000 after a worker's fingers were pinched by a press and seriously injured.
- Another Manitoba employer was fined more than \$36,000 after a worker's fingers were severed by a table saw.

We recently asked what your most common safety issue was when it came to machinery and equipment. You said it's workers who:

- Don't follow safe work procedures (53%)
- Remove or circumvent guards (17%)
- Don't lock/tag out machinery when required (12%)
- Stick their hands into dangerous areas (9%)
- Leave machinery unattended when in operation (7%)
- Wear clothing or jewellery that could get entangled in the equipment (2%).

Failing to address these issues can expose workers to serious injuries—and the company to big fines.

OHS Insider Resources

The OHS Insider has resources to help you tackle these common machinery and equipment safety issues, including information and tools on:

- [Lockout requirements](#)
- [Group lockout](#) requirements
- [Guarding](#) requirements
- Workers' [removing machine guards](#)
- [Due diligence](#) and pinchpoints.

It's also critical that you properly train workers on safe work procedures for the machinery and equipment they use for their jobs. The [Training Compliance Centre](#) has information and tools that can help you ensure workers get proper training.

But even if you adequately train workers, they may still ignore safe work procedures. In that event, it's critical that you properly discipline them for such infractions. Go to the [Discipline & Reprisals Compliance Centre](#) for information and tools on properly disciplining workers without violating their safety rights.