

# Loose Clothing + Machinery = Tragedy



When workers work on or around machinery, you must take steps to ensure that their clothing, PPE, hair, jewellery, etc. doesn't get caught in the equipment. Entanglements can lead to serious injuries.

For example, a certified machinist in New Brunswick was operating a lathe when his sleeve got caught on the spinning metal. His hand and arm were pulled between the spinning jaws and chuck and a fixed part of the lathe. He immediately pressed the emergency stop button on the machine and pulled his arm out. He sustained deep cuts to his left palm and the top of his left forearm.

And too often entanglements can have fatal results:

- A cattle farmer in Iowa was in the feed shed adding cracked corn to ground corn that was then taken by conveyor belt to the outside feed bunk and a herd of 182 beef cattle. Because of the set-up, the farmer had to crouch down and crawl under the conveyor several times during each feeding cycle. While doing so, the collar of his coat got caught in the exposed and unguarded rotating shaft, causing him to strangle to death.
- A 61-year-old woman was working at a Massachusetts bakery when her apron became caught in a conveyor belt, strangling her to death. OSHA cited the bakery for inadequate guarding, insufficient stop buttons and a failure to ensure an emergency stop button was the proper color (red).

To prevent entanglements in your workplace, make sure workers who work with or near machinery follow these safe work practices from WorkSafeBC:

- Wear close-fitting clothing
- Tuck their shirt into their pants
- If workers must wear a long-sleeved shirt for health and safety reasons, they should button the cuffs. If long sleeves aren't required, they should wear short sleeves.
- Don't wear gloves when working near rotating shafts or other moving machine parts. If they must wear gloves for health and safety, make sure they're suitable for the task and don't endanger workers.
- Wear long hair in a bun, tied back or covered with a hat or hairnet.
- Keep facial hair short.

Employers should also bar workers from wearing jewellery in the workplace and properly discipline them when they do so.

But probably most importantly, employers should ensure that machinery is properly guarded with appropriate guards for the equipment. And make sure that workers understand that they shouldn't remove these guards.