

Spot The Safety Violation: Long Hair Can Be Beautiful But Hazardous



Unfortunately, that's not a wig caught in this equipment. What do you think happened here'



Machinery and equipment can expose workers to pinch-points or nip hazards. And it's not just workers' hands or fingers that can get caught in these

hazards' clothing, hair, jewelry and even PPE can also becoming entangled.

This disturbing picture from the Health and Safety Executive, Great Britain's OHS regulator, shows what can happen if a worker's hair gets caught in machinery.

A 25-year-old worker was sorting clothes hangers on a conveyor when her scarf and hair got caught in the chain and sprocket drive of the belt as she bent over to remove accumulated hangers.

She sustained serious throat injuries, lost a substantial part of her hair and broke a finger. She needed several operations and was in the hospital for three months'but she was lucky to be alive.

The HSE found that although the employer had fitted a guard to the conveyor, it didn't fully enclose the dangerous moving parts. There also wasn't an emergency stop button on the conveyor, which could have lessened the impact of the incident.

In addition, the company's risk assessment failed to identify the dangers of entanglement in conveyors, and the need to keep hair and loose clothing secure when near the machinery was poorly enforced. The company pleaded guilty to four safety offences and was fined £60,000.

Entanglements involving hair, clothing and other items happen in Canada, too.

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 pressed the emergency stop button on the machine and pulled his arm out. But he sustained deep cuts to his left palm and the top of his left forearm.

So ensure that your workplace's machinery and equipment have adequate guards and bar workers from removing or bypassing these guards.

7 Tips for Preventing Entanglements

Workers should follow these seven tips to avoid similar entanglements in machinery:

1. Wear close-fitting clothing.
2. Tuck your shirt into your pants.
3. If you must wear a long-sleeved shirt to comply with OHS requirements, button the cuffs. If long sleeves aren't required, wear short sleeves.
4. Don't wear gloves when working near rotating shafts or other moving machine parts. If you must wear gloves for OHS reasons, make sure they're suitable for the task.
5. Don't wear jewelry. (In fact, you should bar workers from wearing jewelry.)
6. Wear long hair in a bun, tied back or covered with a hat or hairnet.
7. Keep facial hair short.