



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Machine Guarding Safety Message

Guarding serves to protect employees from hazards created by rotating parts, pinch points, points of operation, and from flying particles and sparks created by the operation of machines. Unintentional contact with moving parts can cause cuts, amputations, burns, and even death.

According to the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), workers who operate and maintain machinery suffer approximately 18,000 amputations, lacerations, crushing injuries, abrasions, and over 800 deaths per year.

General Guard Requirements

OSHA requires any machine part that could cause injury to be safeguarded. Some examples of where guards are required include moving belts, chains, drums, gears, shafts, pulleys, spindles, sprockets, and flywheels. Safeguards must prevent contact with the hazard, should not be easily removed or defeated, and must not create any additional hazards, such as pinch points.

Machine guards should never be modified or removed. Prior to operating machinery, guards should be inspected. Operators should never try to defeat guards such as two-handed control devices through the use of a "cheater bar" or other means. Prior to adjusting or servicing any machine guard, all applicable lockout/tagout (LOTO) procedures should be followed. Only authorized personnel should conduct servicing of guards. Failure to follow safe work practices can result in serious injury, amputation, or death.

Discussion points:

- * Are there any machine guards damaged or not in place in your work area?
- * Would anyone care to share a story when they experienced a near miss or injury resulting from improper machine guarding?