

Safety Matters

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Avoiding Pinch Point Injuries

It is a common misconception that pinch injuries cannot be serious. In fact, pinch point injuries can be deadly, and they are one of the most common types of on-the-job accidents. Pinch point hazards are particularly difficult to guard against because they are everywhere. In many cases, they cannot be prevented by using engineering controls or personal protective equipment (PPE). Care, caution and alertness on the job are the best defenses against pinch point injuries.

To reduce your risk of pinch point injuries at work, consider the following safety recommendations:

- Before beginning your shift or when working with new equipment, identify potential pinch point hazards. Analyze objects that have the potential to move and ask yourself the following questions:
 - “If this part moves, how will it affect me?”
 - “Will my body be in the way of the movement?”
- Identify objects in the workplace that move and come in contact (or close contact) with fixed objects.
- Be extremely cautious when placing your hands, fingers or feet between two objects. If you are within a pinch point, consider alternative ways to get the task done. If there is no other way to complete the task, make sure that all moveable parts are immobilized before continuing to work.
- Do not operate machinery without the proper guarding equipment in place. Guards form a barrier between pinch points and the points of operation; therefore, if you need to perform repairs or adjustments to the guards themselves, replace them before using the machinery again.
- Keep your feet firmly planted on surfaces designed for walking, climbing or standing, and never use your feet to brace, force or chock objects.
- Wear appropriate gloves for the task at hand. They will serve as protection against injuries, but ill-fitting gloves may be an additional hazard as they can get caught in a machine.
- Follow all lockout/tagout procedures.
- Secure materials so they cannot fall or roll by strapping, racking or interlocking them down.
- Be cautious when handling drums,



rebars, rings and other metal objects.

- Watch out for rolling hazards.
- Refrain from wearing jewelry or loose clothing, and always tie long hair back. These items can potentially get caught in machines.
- Know how to turn off equipment immediately in case of an emergency.