



Tool Box Talk

Equipment, Machine and Tool Guards

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THE BASICS

Moving machine parts have the potential to cause severe workplace injuries, such as crushed fingers or hands, cuts or amputations, burns, eye injuries or blindness. When used correctly, equipment guards and machine guards (also called safeguards) are a key part of construction safety efforts and help prevent workers' clothing and/or body from coming in direct contact with the dangerous moving parts. Guards protect from pinch points; electrical currents; thrown or flying objects/materials; splashing liquids; and fast moving parts of machinery or tools.

Some examples of equipment, machines or tools that require the use of guards:

- ✘ chains, gears, pulleys, cranks, and connecting rods
- ✘ rope, belt and chain drives; power take off (PTO) shafts and flywheels
- ✘ portable saws, belt sanders, grinders, pneumatic and powder actuated tools

A machine guard should be easy to operate with minimum effort. The guard should be suitable for the job and the machine. If the guard is "built-in," it should be checked regularly as guards with rough edges and sharp corners could pose a safety hazard.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Any machine part, function, or process that may cause injury must be safeguarded. If there is a possibility that a worker operating the machine, or those working in the vicinity, could be injured while coming into contact with a machine, the hazards must be eliminated or controlled.

Guards are safe as long as the equipment is regularly monitored and maintained. All guards should be secure and in good condition. If the guard is loose or not working properly, stop work immediately, report the hazard and do not resume work until hazard has been addressed. Other things to consider:

- ✘ Always thoroughly inspect equipment and tools prior to use to ensure that the guards are functioning correctly
- ✘ Follow the manufacturers' recommendations for proper use, care, and maintenance
- ✘ Use the equipment for only its intended purpose
- ✘ Tag defective equipment out of service until it is repaired or discarded and replaced
- ✘ Always wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including, face shields, helmets, gloves, etc. for added safety
- ✘ Safeguards must never be made inoperative

LEGISLATION

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations, 1996 contains the following relevant legislation:

Safeguards—Part X: Machine Safety

137(1) Except where otherwise provided by these regulations, an employer or contractor shall provide an effective safeguard where a worker may contact: (a) a dangerous moving part of a machine; (b) a pinch point, cutting edge or point of a machine at which material is cut, shaped, bored or formed; (c) an open flame; (d) a steam pipe or other surface with a temperature that exceeds or may exceed 80° Celsius; or (e) a cooled surface that is or may be less than minus 80° Celsius.

(2) An employer or contractor shall ensure that a safeguard required by subsection (1) remains in place at all times.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply to: (a) a machine that is equipped with an effective safety device that stops the machine automatically before any part of a worker's body comes into contact with a hazard mentioned in clause (1)(a) or (b); or (b) a belt, rope or chain that is operated from a cathead or capstan.

(4) An employer or contractor shall ensure that a safeguard that is removed from a machine or made ineffective to permit maintenance, testing, repair or adjustment of a machine is replaced or made effective before a worker is required or permitted to use the machine.

(5) Where there is a possibility of machine failure and of injury to a worker resulting from the failure, an employer or contractor shall install safeguards that are strong enough to withstand the impact of debris from the machine failure and to contain any debris resulting from the failure.

OHS Regulations are very specific when it comes to equipment guards so keep the knowledge about the hazards and equipment to a particular work area up-to-date. Communication is key to preventing injuries related to the improper use of equipment and machine guards.

For more information on other topics related to injury prevention and workplace safety, download the free SCSA Guide to OHS Legislation app from the Google or Apple stores by searching for "SCSA" or visit our Tool Box Talks webpage:

www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

Tool Box Talk

How To Use This Resource

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks. Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.



For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

ABOUT THE SASKATCHEWAN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, non-profit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.