

Topic: Pinch Points

How to Avoid Pinch Point Injuries

A worker, who was not properly trained, was operating an aged multi-punch press that was malfunctioning and did not have proper safeguarding. These three unsafe factors all contributed to the worker reaching across a pinch point to reposition the malfunctioning part. When the punch press cycled, the worker's hand was caught between the top of the ram and the machine housing. He suffered crushing injuries to three of his fingers.

What is a Pinch Point?

A pinch point is any point where a body part can be caught between two objects coming together. Generally people associate pinch point hazards with power presses, conveyors and other moving equipment, but really a pinch point can exist anywhere. For example, a pinch point is created between a closing door and its jamb or between materials being unloaded and the surface they are being placed onto. Nipping your fingers with a pair of pliers would be considered a pinch point injury. Pinch point injuries can be as minor as a bruise or as serious as an amputation, or even death.

How to Avoid Pinch Point Injuries

Here are some ways you can protect yourself against the risk of a pinch point injury:

- Identify potential pinch points before starting a task and before using any tool.
- Never operate equipment or machinery without the required machine guards.
- Do not reach around, under or through a guard.
- Follow the company's lockout/tagout procedures and ensure that equipment is de-energized before repairing, unjamming or adjusting any equipment.
- When working, notice where you place your hands and feet. Are they between anything?
- Notice objects around you. What would happen if a load moves or shift unexpectedly? Will you be in the way?
- Pay attention when walking or working in areas that have mobile equipment and fixed structures.
- When working in areas with mobile equipment, make sure the operators see you and acknowledge your presence.
- Do not use your feet to brace or chock objects, such as holding open a door.
- When placing a heavy object down, ensure your feet and hands are safely out of the way first.

Conclusion

Potential pinch points are widespread. Discuss with your supervisor and co-workers potential pinch point hazards in your workplace and pay attention when performing even a small task. Pinch point injuries often occur when a worker is distracted.

Questions:

1. Pinch point hazards exist only in worksites with rotating machinery.

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TOOLBOX TALKS



True or False

2. Pinch point injuries often occur when a worker is _____.

- a. trained
- b. following LOTO procedures
- c. distracted
- d. All of the above

3. When working in areas with mobile equipment, you should _____.

- a. make sure the operator sees you
- b. stay close to the wall
- c. stay in the middle of the pathway
- d. A and B

4. Slamming a drawer on your fingers would be considered a pinch point injury.

True or False

5. Pinch point injuries are generally minor.

True or False

Answers:

1 False, 2c, 3a, 4 True, 5 False