

Machine Guarding Hazards

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Machine guards are critical to the safety of workers. Many times, workers do not realize the dangers that they are protected from because of a simple steel or acrylic guard. For this reason, workers should be familiar with the potential hazards introduced when machines with rotating parts, gears, or pulleys are used.

- Recognizing the potential hazards of machines starts with understanding the first place where the potential for injury exists – this is the “point of operation.”
- According to OSHA the point of operation is *the area on a machine where work is actually performed upon the material being processed.*
- **Workers have to be protected from point of operation hazards.**



OSHA Standard 1910.212(a)(3) *Point of operation is the area on a machine where work is actually performed upon the material being processed. The point of operation of machines whose operation exposes an employee to injury, shall be guarded. The guarding... shall be so designed and constructed as to prevent the operator from having any part of his body in the danger zone during the operating cycle.*

In addition to point of operation dangers, workers need to be aware of these machine guarding hazards:

- Power-transmission apparatus — flywheels, pulleys, belts, chains, couplings, spindles, cams, and gears in addition to connecting rods and other machine components that transmit energy.
- Other moving parts — machine components that move during machine operation such as reciprocating, rotating, and transverse moving parts as well as auxiliary machine parts.

IMPORTANT ↘

- Workers responsible to operate, repair, clean, or just work near to machines and tools must be protected from potential hazards.
- Never tamper with or remove a machine guard, sensor, or safety device!
- Only personnel that have received specific training and follow the correct procedures are authorized to remove, repair, or modify a machine guard.

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