

Amputations Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Amputations are a very serious health and safety concern in the workplace. OSHA reports there is an average of seven amputations that occur in US workplaces every single day. This reported number has resulted from OSHA requiring employers to report serious injuries starting in 2015.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Each year, thousands of workers lose fingers, hands, feet, and other body parts—mostly through compression, crushing, or by getting them caught between or struck by objects. Most amputations involve fingertips.

Amputations occur most often when the following equipment is unguarded

- Mechanical power presses
- Power press brakes
- Powered and non-powered conveyors
- Printing presses
- Roll-forming and roll-bending machines
- Food slicers
- Meat grinders
- Band saws
- Drill presses
- Milling machines
- Shears, grinders, and slitters
- Table and portable saws
- Government and industry bodies point out that there have been reductions in worker injury rates over the last couple of decades, although the figures still remain higher than average.
- Records compiled by the Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA) reveal that, on average, there are at least 17 “severe” incidents a month in US meat plants. These injuries are classified as those involving “hospitalisations, amputations or loss of an eye”.

- Amputations, fractured fingers, second-degree burns and head trauma are just some of the serious injuries suffered by US meat plant workers every week.
- US meat workers are already three times more likely to suffer serious injury than the average American worker, and pork and beef workers nearly seven times more likely to suffer repetitive strain injuries.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

OSHA NATIONAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM ON AMPUTATIONS

- **The purpose of National Emphasis Program on amputations**, is to help identify and reduce workplace machinery and equipment hazards that are likely to cause amputation.
- The program has a 2-pronged approach:

1. **Outreach**

- OSHA supports employers in high-risk industries and employee unions to provide safety workshops. This may include meetings, training, education, speeches or other activities to encourage employees to take an active part in identifying and reporting concerns about workplace safety related to possible amputation.
- The program also encourages the formation of consultation projects in order for employees to develop their own strategic approaches on how to reduce the risk of amputation.

2. **Inspection**

- The Certified Safety and Health Official (CSHO) confirms the presence of hazardous machinery, and assesses for nip points, pinch points, shear points, cutting actions, and other points of operation.

- They assess employee exposure to those hazards during any of the following actions:
- Regular operation of the machine
- Setup/threading/preparation for regular operation of the machine
- Clearing jams or upset conditions
- Making running adjustments while the machine is operating
- Cleaning of the machine
- Oiling or greasing of the machine or machine pans
- Scheduled/unscheduled maintenance
- Locking out or tagging out

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO PREVENT AN ACCIDENTAL AMPUTATION FROM HAPPENING

By far the most common cause of amputations in the workplace is machinery hazards. Follow machine guarding and lockout/tagout (LOTO) precautions to use machines safely and prevent amputations.

Do this by:

- Preventing operation if a hand or body part is placed in the danger area;
- Restraining or withdrawing the hands from the danger area during operation;
- Requiring use of both hands on machine controls or the use of one hand if the control is mounted a safe distance from the danger area; and
- Providing a barrier that is synchronized with the operation cycle to prevent entry to the danger area.

FINAL WORD

Be aware of the different hazards that can cause amputation injuries in the workplace. Focus on eliminating as many of these hazards as possible then look to use effective engineering controls to protect yourself and coworkers from amputation injuries.