Caught in Motion: Pinch-Points, Moving Parts and Machinery Safety Meeting Kit

WHAT’S AT STAKE

Machines don’t hesitate, slow down, or think twice – they move with full force the moment they’re activated. Working near pinch-points and fast-moving parts means one slip, one distraction, or one reach in the wrong spot can pull you in before you realize what happened. These injuries are severe because machines keep moving even after contact, leaving little time to react.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

The danger around moving machinery is how fast everything happens. You don’t get a warning, and you don’t get time to pull away. One small reach, one loose sleeve, or one moment of distraction is all it takes for a hand, finger, or piece of clothing to get pulled into a moving part. Once a machine grabs you, it doesn’t stop instantly and that’s why these injuries are so severe.

Pinch-Points and Moving Parts Don’t Forgive Mistakes

Gears, belts, rollers, chains, rotating shafts, and sliding parts can trap or crush in seconds. Even a small gap is strong enough to pull in skin, gloves, or clothing. Most caught-in injuries happen during “quick” adjustments, clearing jams, or trying to grab something near the moving part.

Where Workers Get Caught Most Often

- Hands entering equipment to clear a jam
- Clothing or gloves pulled into rotating parts
- Reaching over or beside unguarded machinery
- Getting pinned between moving equipment and fixed objects

- Standing in a machine’s travel path

These moments happen fast, usually when workers underestimate how far apart moves or try to finish a task quickly.

Unexpected Machine Movement

Machinery can start automatically, restart after a pause, or move from sensor activation or operator controls. When equipment cycles without warning, anyone inside the danger zone can be caught, struck, or pinned before they even realize the machine is starting.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Staying safe around machinery means keeping yourself out of danger zones and never assuming a machine is “safe” just because it looks still. Moving parts are fast, powerful, and unforgiving, so the way you position yourself, the way you use your tools, and the habits you build are what keep you protected.

Respect Guards, Barriers, and Lockout Procedures

Guards and covers exist to stop your hands, clothing, and tools from reaching moving parts. Never remove or bypass them. When you need to clean, clear, or repair something, lock out the machine completely — not just “pause” it. A machine that isn’t locked out can restart without warning.

Stay Out of Danger Zones

Learn the movement pattern of each machine, including how far parts extend, swing, rotate, or pinch. Keep your hands, body, and clothing away from any point where two surfaces come together. If you must approach equipment, make sure all motion is stopped and verified.

What to Do Before Working Near Machinery

- Secure loose clothing, gloves, hair, and jewelry
- Keep tools and materials out of travel paths

- Confirm guards and emergency stops are in place
- Stand clear of pinch-points, rollers, and rotating parts
- Use tools, push sticks, or long-handled devices instead of your hands

Note:

Never use your hands to remove jams around rollers or belts. Always shut down, lock out, and verify the machine is fully isolated. Using tools instead of hands keeps distance between you and the pinch-point.

If multiple people work near machinery, make sure everyone knows when equipment is starting, stopping, or being serviced.

FINAL WORD

Machines move fast and won’t stop for mistakes. Staying clear of danger zones, using guards, and locking out equipment when needed are simple choices that prevent severe injuries.