Keep your Guard Up around Machines

What’s at Stake?

Exposure to unguarded or improperly guarded machines causes over 1000 deaths and 20,000 serious cuts, crushing injuries, scalpings and amputations every year.

These injuries are gruesome, painful and often disabling and happen when working with any machine or tool that can punch, spin, rotate, shear, bend, cut, roll, grind or slice.

What’s the Danger?

Machines have one or more of the following four hazardous motions involved in their operation.

1. Rotating – or circular motion.
2. Reciprocating – or back-and-forth or up-and-down motion.
3. Transverse – or straight line motion; and
4. In-running nip points – also called pinch points.

Getting any part of your body caught up in these motions can bruise, cut, trap, crush or sever a body part.

How to Protect Yourself

While your employer is responsible for ensuring machines are properly guarded there are things you can do to ensure your safety.

Before use:

- Only operate machines you are trained and authorized to use.
- Inspect machines and equipment before each use to verify all guards are in place.

- Review safety guidelines and standard operating procedures.

During use:

- Observe all safety guidelines and standard operating procedures.
- Wear required PPE.
- Never bypass or remove guards or other safety devices; and
- Never operate machines without guards and safeguards in place and working properly.

After use:

- Perform required maintenance.
- Clean up machine and area as required; and
- Safely shut down machine if required.

At any time:

Report any of the following to your supervisor:

- Missing guards.
- Malfunctioning guards; and any
- Machine hazards.

Final Word

Stay safe and don’t let your guard down when working with or around machines.