

Pinch Points Meeting Kit

A pinch point is “any point at which it is possible for a person or part of a person’s body to be caught between moving parts of a machine, or between the moving and stationary parts of a machine, or between material and any part of the machine” according to the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Pinch Points are pervasive at work occurring traditionally with a number of machines and devices, including power presses, conveyors, robotic machines, metal-forming machines, powered rollers, assembling machines, plastic molding machinery, printing presses, power transmission equipment, powered doors, covers and hatches.

COMMON CAUSES OF INJURIES FROM PINCH POINTS:

- Not paying attention to the location of hands and feet.
- Walking or working in areas with mobile equipment and fixed structures.
- Loose clothing, hair or jewelry getting caught in rotating parts or equipment; Poor condition of equipment and guarding.
- Dropping or carelessly handling materials or suspended loads.
- Not using the proper work procedures or tools.
- Reaching into moving equipment and machinery.

SAFETY TIPS TO AVOID PINCH POINT INJURIES

Follow the dress code – Wearing the right kind of clothing when working in areas where pinch injuries can occur is critically important. Pant legs and shirt sleeves shouldn’t be too long or too loose. Shirts should be tucked into the pants to reduce the risk of them getting caught in moving machinery.

Leave the jewelry home – All jewelry should be removed, especially dangling earrings, necklaces, and rings.

Tuck away long hair – Long hair should be tied back, and braids and ponytails should be kept at the back of the head and secured. Hair falling forward or down toward the machinery could get caught in its pinch points.

Wear your safety gear – The right personal protective gear for the job should be worn at all times. Make sure safety gloves fit properly to avoid getting them caught.

Conduct a pre-inspection – Inspect machinery for any potential hazards before anyone operates it. Make a safety plan and follow through with it during the entire time the machine is in operation.

Stay alert and focused – Anyone operating equipment should stay totally focused on the job at hand and keep their eyes focused on the moving parts. Minimize distractions in the work environment as much as possible.

Use machine guards – Make sure that the right guard has been installed on the equipment and make sure that it is fitted properly. If you notice missing or damaged safety guards during your pre-inspection, don't put the machinery into operation.

Know how to deal with a jam – Make sure you learn how to safely deal with the machine if it becomes jammed. Before you clean or fix jammed equipment, make sure it has been turned off and come to a complete stop. Familiarize yourself with the lockout/Tagout procedures.

Look beyond the machinery – Pinch points aren't just found in industrial equipment. Machinery pinch points can cause serious injuries, but so can a stack of heavy items. Even getting your hand or foot jammed in the door might cause enough damage to require medical attention.

When it comes to working or operating machinery with rotating parts, pinch point safety is imperative. In the work environment,

pinch points are used to explain situations where hand tools, machines, and various conditions place body parts or a worker's entire body at risk.

PINCH POINT DANGERS

- A pinch point injury can be the result of something as large as an excavator or as small as a pair of pliers. As a matter of fact, most tools and equipment have pinch points. Of the millions of disabling accidents that happen on the job, one third of them are hand injuries. Approximately 80% of these hand injuries are caused by pinch points.
- Pinch point hazards can be as narrow as the space between crane outriggers or as wide as a doorway. While there are countless machines that create pinch points, some of the most common include:
 - Loaders
 - Gears
 - Conveyors
 - And more

Other pinch points are less obvious, such as:

- Vehicles in reverse could crush a worker against the wall.
- Closely stored drums or crates may pinch hands or fingers between each other and a dolly.
- The rungs of an extension ladder can catch feet, hands, and fingers as they slide past each other.
- A body part or a piece of clothing can get caught up in machinery, between equipment or between a lid and a container when closing.

FINAL WORD

Pinch point injuries are not just the domain of workplaces where there is heavy equipment. They find their way to all workplaces including the white-collar workplace where pinch points occur in filing cabinets and door jambs.

