Pinch Points and Hand Injuries Meeting Kit



INTRODUCTION

We use out hands for virtually all work tasks that we do. Because of how often we use our hands, they are often in the line of fire where they can be injured. Hand injuries are the second leading type of injury on the job in the United States. **Pinch points are a leading cause of both minor and serious injuries to the fingers and hands.**

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 a stationary object and moving object or between moving parts or objects. A pinch point not only can cause injury to a limb or body part, but can cause a person to become trapped or pinched between the two objects. An example of a pinch point that everyone can probably relate to is shutting your finger or hand in a door.

Body parts can become caught between moving parts, moving or stationary machine parts, moving parts and materials, between materials or equipment when moving them, slamming fingers or hands in doors, pinching fingers or hand with equipment that has sliding parts or hinges, machines such as presses and rollers, and tools. Pinch points commonly impact the fingers or hands, but can include any area of the body. Injuries resulting from pinch points can be minor, such as contusions or blisters, or more serious, such as amputation or even death.

COMMON CAUSES OF INJURIES FROM PINCH POINTS INCLUDE:

- Not keeping your eyes on the task at hand or not paying attention.
- Working or walking in areas with mobile equipment and fixed structures.
- Using tools for purposes other than their intended use.
- Placing body parts into moving equipment or machinery.
- Improper handling of materials or suspended loads.
- Defective equipment or not using guards.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES INCLUDE:

- Verify all guards are in place and effective.

- Identify all potential pinch points before starting work.
- Always make sure mobile equipment operators know you are in the area. Never put yourself in a position between mobile equipment and a stationary object.
- When performing lockout tagout verify the equipment is deenergized before starting work.
- Stay alert and keep your eyes on the task you are performing. Always know where your body parts are.
- Review operating manuals and work procedures before starting work, these may identify potential pinch points.
- Heavy duty gloves may help protect against certain types of pinch points.

SAFETY CONTROLS FOR PINCH POINTS

- **Machine guarding:** Verify all guarding is in place and effective
- **Personal Protective Equipment:** Heavy-duty gloves, metacarpal guards, forearm guards, etc. Do not wear gloves around rotating machinery
- **Pre-work inspection:** Identify potential pinch points before starting work
- **Stay in employee designated areas:** Always make sure mobile equipment operators know your location
- **Lockout/Tagout:** Always verify the equipment is de-energized before starting any maintenance work
- **Alertness:** Drowsiness leads to inattentive work habits and shortcuts
- **Operating manuals and work procedures:** Always review these before starting work; pinch points may also be identified in these documents.

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 kept on at all times. Make sure safety gloves fit properly to avoid getting them caught (consult this sizing chart to make sure you get the right size).

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.

FINAL WORD

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.