

Caught Between' Hazards

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

When you work around machinery, vehicles and anything else that moves, you could be caught in a tight spot and crushed. Every year many workers are killed or seriously injured this way.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

"Caught between" is the term used to describe these injury and fatality incidents. These words refer to being caught between two moving objects or between a moving object and a stationary object. The result is compression and crushing injuries which can be fatal. The places where these incidents occur are called "pinch points."

EXAMPLE

An example involving two moving objects is getting caught in running machinery – between a chain and sprocket, a set of gears, or rollers on a press. Examples of being caught between a moving object and a stationary object are being crushed between a truck and a loading dock, or slamming a hand in a vehicle door.

Getting caught in a pinch point can cause a disabling injury such as a hand mangled beyond repair. When a hand is caught in moving machinery, the entire body can be dragged through the machinery, killing the worker.

"Caught between" injuries can occur in any kind of workplace, but they are particularly a hazard in manufacturing where machines are used to move, press, stamp and cut materials. Heavy equipment used in construction is also a common factor in crushing injuries. In mechanical repair, workers have been crushed by vehicles traveling across the shop floor.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- Ensure all machine guards are in place to prevent contact with moving parts, such as gears and rollers.
- Don't wear loose clothing or jewelry around moving equipment because these can catch on the rotating machine parts and pull you in.
- Carefully follow lockout procedures so equipment cannot be started unintentionally when you are doing adjustments or maintenance. Always test the equipment once it's locked out to ensure your lockout has worked.
- Observe all precautions to avoid being struck by moving equipment such as forklifts. Never assume the operator can see you. Don't stand in the path of a vehicle, including one being repaired.

FINAL WORD

"Caught between" hazards come in all sizes. Some are traps which can crush a hand. Others can cause fatal compression injuries to the head or chest. Always be alert to the danger of any kind of pinch point.

QUIZ

1. The worst thing that can happen in a pinch point is a hand injury.
 - True
 - False
2. "Caught between" injuries only occur in industrial workplaces.
 - True
 - False
3. You should make sure all machine guards are in place before using equipment.
 - True
 - False
4. Lockout procedures are designed to prevent unintentional startup of equipment.
 - True
 - False
5. It is safe to assume the operator of mobile equipment can see you in the path of the machine.
 - True
 - False

BEFORE THE TALK - TIPS

1. Contact with moving or stationary objects is a leading cause of workplace fatalities. Ask your safety office if there have been any such incidents in your plant. How did they occur, and how could they have been prevented?
2. If you have any weekend farmers among your employees, put in a reminder about the danger of getting entangled in an unguarded power take-off.
3. Ask your workers to identify "hand traps" in your work area. These are places where a hand could be crushed, or where a worker could be pulled into the machinery by an entrapped hand.
4. Ask the group about other pinch points. Where could someone be caught between a moving object and a stationary object? What about danger zones in the parking garage or the area where a forklift is in use?
5. This safety meeting is an opportunity to make sure all equipment is adequately guarded.
6. Machine guarding and lockout/tagout are two of the top 10 reasons for citations by OSHA (the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration).
7. See additional information about lockout/tagout on page 11 in this issue of Safety Talks!

AFTER THE TALK- CHECKLIST

PROVIDED FOLLOW-UP TO WORKERS THAT DID

POORLY ON THE QUIZ

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

OBSERVED WORKERS

TASK(S): _____

DATE: _____

REFRESHER TRAINING

TOPIC(S): _____

DATE:

OTHER (DESCRIBE):

MEETING DATE:

LOCATION: _____

NOTES

ANSWERS:

ATTENDANCE

INSTRUCTOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

SAFETY TALK: