



## Don't get in a Pinch

When you pinch a finger at home or away from work, it's usually no more than a painful nuisance. But pinches in the workplace can be a lot more serious. There is no comparing the power of a slammed screen door with the force of industrial machinery. A pinch-point injury on the job can be seriously disabling and can cause amputation, or even death.

Pinch points can occur anywhere a part of the body can get caught between two objects. This hazard is everywhere in the workplace. Any place where equipment is transmitting energy, there is a pinch point.

## Shortcuts Lead to Danger

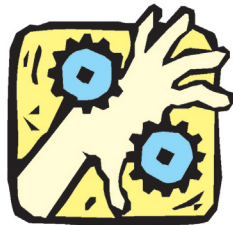
Often pinch-point injuries are the result of workers, who are not properly trained, don't realize the dangers of machinery, or take shortcuts to get the work done more quickly, but end up injuring themselves instead. *Never perform a task without proper training, by taking shortcuts, or bypassing procedures; the consequences could be serious.*

## Keep Your Guard Up

In addition to making sure that workers understand how potentially dangerous pinch points can be, it is important to ensure equipment is properly guarded to keep workers away from hazardous areas. This can happen even before equipment is purchased. New equipment should be evaluated with a safety checklist based on input from engineers, workers, and safety personnel. The manufacturer should be asked to make adjustments to eliminate hazards before the equipment is purchased.

Once equipment has been purchased and installed, it is important to monitor workers' behavior to ensure that they are not exposing themselves to risk of injury. Under normal operating conditions, workers tend to remain within the parameters of safe operation. It is when upset or abnormal operations are encountered that workers have a tendency to unnecessarily expose themselves to pinch-point hazards.

Just because a guard has been installed to cover a machine pinch point doesn't mean the guard is going



to stay there. Removing guards is, unfortunately, a fairly common practice. In some cases, guards can be missing for such a long time that new employees are not aware a guard is required. *It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that all moving parts on equipment and machinery are properly guarded.*

## Proper Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) Reduces Pinch-Point Hazards

Because pinch-point injuries often occur when a machine is being stopped temporarily for service or cleaning, it is extremely important that workers follow necessary procedures for lockout and tagout (LOTO). Workers can follow guard policies for when the machine is running, but when it's stopped and the guard is removed, if the equipment is not de-energized, a worker is not safe.

## Everyone's Responsibility

The best protection from pinch-point hazards comes not from procedures, but from the personal attention of employers and workers to potential hazards.

- Review the dangers of pinch points and the procedures for working safely on a regular basis.
- Perform frequent, targeted inspections to ensure that guards are not missing and procedures are being followed.
- Reward employees for identifying and reporting hazards and quickly resolve those hazards.

Safety is everyone's responsibility and should not be learned by accident.

This Take 5 was published with information from BP America Production Company, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, and the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI-DWC).