

safety matters

Construction
Toolbox Talks for

From your safety partners at Cool Insuring Agency, Inc.

Preventing Pinch Point Injuries on the Job Site

Pinch point hazards are situations where machines, hand tools, equipment and other conditions put workers' hands, feet or entire body in danger. There are many pinch point hazards on the construction site, some as small as a pair of pliers and others as large as an excavator. In fact, most equipment has the ability to cause pinch point injuries.

Pinch point hazards are particularly difficult to guard against because in many cases, they cannot be prevented by using engineering controls or personal protective equipment (PPE). Often times the best defense is using care, caution and alertness on site.

To reduce your risk of pinch point injuries at work, the most important thing you can do is identify potential hazards before your shift or when working with new equipment. Pay particular attention to any equipment with moving parts, moving objects that come into close contact with fixed objects and heavy objects stacked closely together. Even commonplace objects on the construction site like extension ladders, heavy steel doors or heavy covers for bins and hoppers can put you at risk. Use the following safety recommendations to protect yourself:

- Be extremely cautious when placing your hands, fingers or feet between two objects. If you are within a pinch point, consider alternative ways to get the task done. If there is no other way to complete the task, make sure that all moveable parts are immobilized before continuing to work.
- Keep your feet firmly planted on surfaces designed for walking, climbing or standing, and never use your feet to brace, force or chock objects.
- Wear appropriate gloves for the task at hand.
- Follow all lockout/tagout procedures.
- Secure materials so they cannot fall or roll by strapping, racking or interlocking them down.
- Be cautious when handling drums, rebars, rings and other metal objects.
- Watch out for rolling hazards.
- Refrain from wearing jewelry or loose clothing, and always tie long hair back.
- Know how to turn off equipment immediately in case of an emergency.

More than 80 percent of on-the-job hand injuries are caused by pinch points; however, pinch point hazards can also cause death or serious harm to the whole body.

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