

Machine Guarding as Safety Practice

FIRST STEP: CONDUCT MACHINE OPERATION HAZARD ASSESSMENT

This article is from the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) Newsletter Aug. 25, 2011, by Jess Mc-

Clure, director of regulatory affairs. (Editor's note: This is the third in a series of "Safety First!" columns

published periodically to reiterate the importance of observing practical and effective safety practices in the workplace to protect employee safety and health.)



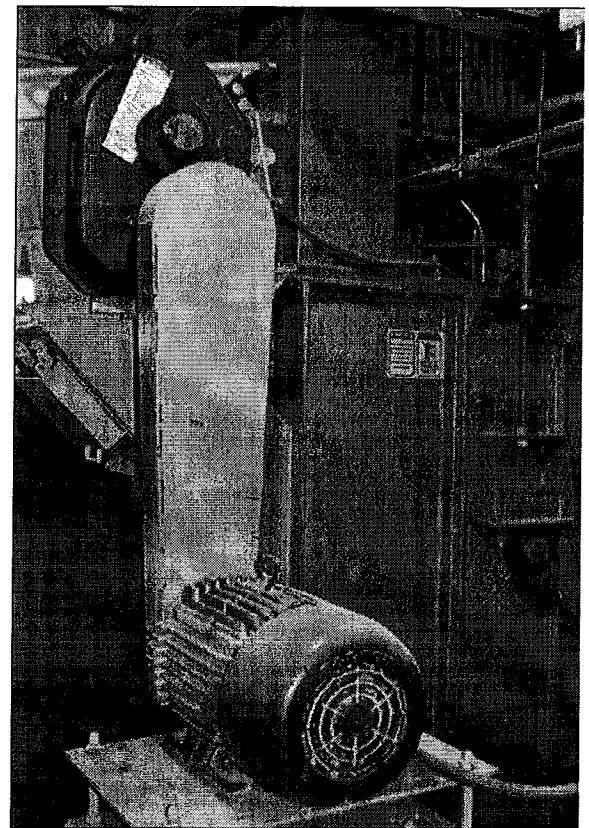
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Machine guards protect workers from being exposed to moving parts or a variety of other hazards. Photo by Ed Zdrojewski.

equate. While the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) machine guarding regulations [29CFR 1910.212] do not specify training requirements, the so-called General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act requires that employers provide a safe work environment. Employees trained to understand mechanical hazards are better equipped to protect themselves from those hazards.

OSHA Regulations

OSHA specifically addresses guarding of machinery in the following sections of its regulations:

- Section 1910.211: Definitions.
- Section 1910.212(a): General Requirements for All Machines.
- Section 1910.215: Abrasive Wheel Machinery.
- Section 1910.219(b)(1): Mechanical Power-Transmission Apparatus (Flywheel and Gear Covers).
- Section 1910.241-.244: Guarding of Portable Powered Tools.

OSHA's list of machines requiring point-of-operation guarding include milling machines, portable power tools, guillotine cutters, shears, power presses, power saws, jointers, and forming rolls and calendars.

Machine Guard Positioning

The three main areas where machine guarding is to be provided are:

- The point-of-operation: The point where work is performed.
- Power transmission apparatuses: The components that transmit energy to the part of the machine performing the work.
- Other moving parts: All parts of the machine that move while the machine is operating.

The safeguards include:

1. Preventing a worker's body or clothing from contacting hazardous parts.
2. Firmly securing the guard to the machine so it cannot be removed easily.
3. Ensuring no objects can fall into moving parts.
4. Removing any shear points, jagged edges or unfinished surfaces.
5. Removing impediments that could prevent the operator from performing the job quickly and com-

fortably.

6. Lubricating the machine, if possible, without removing the safeguards.

Training

Employees who work with or are affected by machine hazards should receive training on the following:

- How operating procedures can help reduce the risk of injury.
- The hazards involved in machine operation.
- A description of the safeguards in

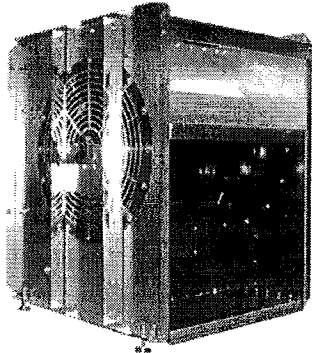
use and how they reduce risk.

- How to use adjustable guards.
- How to report damaged, malfunctioning or missing guards.
- Machine servicing that can be done as part of normal operations.
- Situations that require equipment lockout/tagout during servicing.
- Responding to injuries or accidents that involve machine operation.

For more information, go to the OSHA website: www.osha.gov/SLTC/machineguarding/index.html. ■

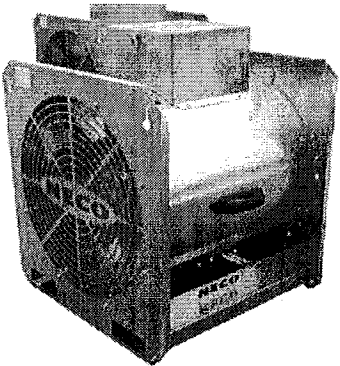
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