



# TOOLBOX TALKS

## Equipment, Machine and Tool Guards

One of the major causes of accidents occurring on worksites is the misuse of machinery.

Moving machine parts have the potential to cause severe workplace injuries, such as crushed fingers or hands, cuts or amputations, burns, eye injuries or blindness.

When used correctly, equipment/machine/tool guards or safeguards help prevent workers' clothing and/or body from coming in contact with the dangerous moving parts.

Guards protect from pinch points; electrical currents; thrown or flying objects/materials; splashing liquids; and fast-moving parts of machinery or tools.

### 4 TYPES OF MACHINE GUARDS

There are four types of machine guards that you should be aware of and know the difference between.

**Fixed Guard.** This is a permanently fixed guard that is part of the machine. Machines will have fixed guards whenever possible because they provide the best level of protection.

**Interlocking Guards.** These guards will automatically shut off or disengage the machine when the guard is opened or removed. You cannot use the machine again until the guard is put back into position.

**Self-Adjusting Guards.** These guards adjust depending on the size and movement of the material. The guard will move out of the way to allow the material to pass through or, in the case of a saw, when the material is being cut.

**Adjustable Guards.** These guards can be adjusted when required to accommodate different sizes of the material to be worked on or cut. The downside is that accidents are more likely to happen due to human error.

## **SAFEGUARDS ARE INSTALLED AND MAINTAINED ON OUR MACHINERY TO:**

**Prevent Contact.** Machine guards are there to reduce (and hopefully eliminate) the possibility that the machine operator or a co-worker's body parts come into contact with the machine in a way that is likely to cause an accident to occur.

**Ensure Machine Safety.** Good machine guards provide safety for the operator and others working around the machine. They are designed to not be removed and to be durable so that safety can be improved in the workplace.

**Protect from Falling Objects.** The guard protects from other objects falling into the moving parts of the machine. When this happens, it can cause injuries to occur to the operator and those around the machine.

### **MACHINE SAFETY TIPS**

- Before using a tool or machine, make sure the guarding is in good working order.
- Make sure all tools are in good condition and have been regularly maintained (check the records).
- Only use machines and tools that you have been trained to use. Make sure it is the right tool for the job.
- Make sure the tool is clean and free from any debris that could create a hazard. Always operate machines according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always use the correct personal protective equipment PPE.
- Disconnect tools from the power when not in use, during servicing, and when changing accessories.
- Follow the correct lockout/tag-out procedures.
- Make sure all other staff members are a safe distance away from the machine when you're operating it.
- NEVER remove machine guarding.

For additional information refer to WorkSafe Safe Use of Machinery best practice guidelines:

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/dmsdocument/695-safe-use-of-machinery>