

Machine Guarding and the Point of Operation

About 9 minutes to deliver

The guard that is in the way is the one holding your hand back from the part that cuts — and the reason bypassing one is never a small decision.

1910.212(a)(3)(ii) says it plainly: the point of operation of a machine whose operation exposes an employee to injury shall be guarded, and where there is no specific standard, the guard must be designed to prevent the operator having any part of their body in the danger zone during the operating cycle.

Not "reduce the chance". Prevent.

THREE PLACES A MACHINE GETS YOU

- The point of operation — where the blade, bit, die or wheel meets the work. This is where the amputations happen.
- Power transmission — belts, pulleys, chains, sprockets, shafts and couplings, covered by 1910.219. A rotating shaft with a keyway in it will take a sleeve, a glove or a hand faster than you can react.
- In-running nip points — anywhere two parts rotate toward each other, or a belt runs onto a pulley. A nip point does not need to be sharp. It just needs to keep turning.

WHY GUARDS COME OFF

Almost always for a real reason: it slowed the job down, it jammed, it made a measurement impossible, it was already off when you got there. None of those change what the machine does to a hand.

- A guard that makes the job impossible is a guard that needs fixing, not removing. Say so and we will sort it.
- If you take one off to clear a jam, the machine is locked out first. Reaching into a stopped machine that is still energised is the classic amputation — it restarts, or the stored energy in a spring or a flywheel lets go.
- Never defeat an interlock. Taping a switch, jamming a key, wiring round a gate. If somebody has done it, the machine stops until it is put right.
- Report a missing guard the same day. An unguarded machine gets tagged out, not used gently.

WHILE YOU WORK

- No gloves, loose sleeves, rings, watches, lanyards or long hair loose near rotating parts. Gloves near a drill press or a lathe are worse than bare hands — the machine takes the glove and your hand is inside it.
- Never reach over, under or through a guard, even for a second, even with the machine coasting.
- Let it stop on its own. Never brake a blade or a chuck with your hand or a piece of stock.

ASK THE CREW

- Is there a guard anywhere in this shop that is off, taped up, or bypassed right now?
- Which machine here has a guard that genuinely gets in the way of the job?
- When a machine jams, what do people actually do — and does it involve a lock?

29 CFR 1910.212 · 29 CFR 1910.219 · 29 CFR 1910.147

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Machine Guarding and the Point of Operation

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Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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