



## Machine Guarding and Point-of-Operation

### Purpose

This Toolbox Safety Talk focuses on machine guarding and point-of-operation hazards, which represent the most frequent and severe injury risks in manufacturing environments. Operations involving punch presses, press brakes, lathes, mills, water jets, and similar equipment expose workers to pinch points, rotating components, cutting zones, and crushing forces that can cause permanent injuries in seconds.

### Why This Matters

Most serious manufacturing injuries occur when hands, fingers, clothing, or tools enter the point of operation or contact moving parts. These incidents often happen during routine tasks such as clearing jams, adjusting material, troubleshooting, or rushing to keep production moving. Machine guards exist because someone was injured or killed without them.

### Common Machine Guarding Hazards

- Exposed pinch points on presses, dies, rollers, and feed mechanisms
- Rotating parts such as chucks, spindles, shafts, and belts
- Inadequate guarding during setup, adjustment, or maintenance
- Bypassed, disabled, or removed guards and light curtains
- Loose clothing, gloves, jewelry, or long hair near moving machinery.

### Required Safe Work Practices

- Never bypass, remove, or disable machine guards or safety devices
- Keep hands out of the point of operation using tools, fixtures, or push devices
- Secure loose clothing, remove jewelry, and tie back long hair
- Stop the machine before making adjustments or clearing material
- Follow lockout and energy isolation procedures before maintenance or jam clearing
- Verify guards are in place and functioning before starting equipment

### Stop Work Authority

If a guard is missing, damaged, or not functioning properly, stop work immediately and report it. Do not operate equipment that does not provide proper protection. No production goal justifies bypassing safety systems.

### Closing Message

Machines do not recognize experience, seniority, or intent. They operate the same way every time. Staying alert, respecting machine guarding, and controlling energy sources is the difference between a normal workday and a life-changing injury. Take the extra moment to do it safely.