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Risk services

Workplace safety update

November 2026

Machine safety: Avoiding pinch point hazards

"Pinch points" are machine points that can pinch a body part between two moving parts or between one part that's moving and one part that's stationary. Pinch points are among the most common hazards in the workplace, and they cause many injuries, from scrapes and bruises to broken bones and worse.

Some pinch points occur on machinery. Examples include in-running calendar rolls and other rotating parts, belts, and pulleys. These areas are guarded with machine guards and other methods. **Never remove a machine guard** or try to get around any of the safety devices in place to protect from pinch points. If a guard is missing or broken, tell a supervisor, and don't use the machine until it's fixed.

Follow these precautions to prevent pinch point injuries from machines:

- Make sure all covers, guards, and protective shields for machinery and equipment are in place before using the equipment.
- Never place hands near or reach across rotating machinery parts.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing and dangling jewelry around machinery and other pinch points. Keep long hair tied back.
- Use caution whenever you place fingers, hands, feet, or other body parts between any objects.

Other pinch points are created by worker activity. It would be impossible to guard all of these, so be aware of where they're likely to occur and use caution.



Pinch points that aren't guarded can be found everywhere. The door hinge is a pinch point, pliers and similar tools can serve as pinch points, and pinch points can be found in storage areas where heavy boxes or barrels are stacked close together. A hand truck moving through a narrow doorway can be a pinch point; even an extension ladder has pinch point hazards.

The best defense against injuries from unguarded pinch points is awareness. As you work, think about where pinch points might occur, and keep your hands, fingers, and other body parts away from those areas. Don't rush; you're more likely to make careless mistakes and end up with an injury as a result.

When a pinch point isn't guarded by a safety device, it's often up to workers to avoid injuries. So, think about unguarded pinch points in your own workplace and approach them carefully.

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Wake up! It's Drowsy Driving Prevention Week

To coincide with the end of daylight-saving time (DST), Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (DDPW) is held annually during the first full week of November. This year's events will take place **November 1 to 7**. Sponsored by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), DDPW is a time to reflect on how dangerously common—but preventable—drowsy driving is.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that an estimated 100,000 crashes each year are caused primarily by drowsy driving, resulting in more than 71,000 injuries and, in 2024, 644 deaths. In fact, operating a vehicle after getting 4 hours of sleep or less is like driving drunk. Young drivers—those aged 16 to 25 years—and shift workers are at greatest risk of falling asleep behind the wheel.

Key steps to prevent you from driving while drowsy include:

1. Getting the recommended amount of sleep (7 to 9 hours) the night before your trip. You can achieve better sleep by avoiding heavy meals, alcohol, and electronic devices before bedtime and sleeping in a quiet, cool, and dark environment.

2. Checking your prescription and over-the-counter medications to see if drowsiness is a side effect.

3. Planning long trips with a companion. Having someone to talk to keeps you alert and engaged.

4. Scheduling regular stops every 100 miles or 2 hours and avoiding the road between midnight and 6:00 a.m., as well as late afternoon, when sleepiness is at a peak.

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RISK REFLECTIONS

The best safety programs never stop looking

By: Jeff Byxbe, Sr. Risk Services Consultant

For about eight years, I worked with a client that had a truly exceptional safety program. The director overseeing their safety efforts was passionate, organized, and really knew his stuff, not just when it came to safety, but in every aspect of their operations. About once a year, they asked me to walk through their facilities and offer my observations. I always arrived knowing it would be challenging to find something meaningful to contribute. There was no low-hanging fruit there! But here's the thing: they were always appreciative of even the smallest observation because I brought a fresh set of eyes. I wasn't working there every day, so I sometimes noticed things that familiarity had allowed to blend into the background. That can happen naturally in any workplace, and this client deserved credit for recognizing it. To me, that reflects a hidden strength of a great safety culture – the humility to remain open to another perspective, even when you are already doing things exceptionally well.

Always treat cuts and scrapes: First-aid basics

Despite being able to easily prevent infection through simple first aid, many workers still let small cuts and scrapes go without treatment. But infection can take over and keep an employee off the job, so any wound requires immediate attention.

Staphylococcus (staph), streptococcus (strep), and C. tetani (tetanus) are the most common microbes that enter the body through small, harmless-looking cuts. Serious infections may result in the amputation of an appendage, nervous system damage, or even death.

To prevent cuts and scrapes, wear work gloves to protect your hands from hazards, especially when handling sharp materials. Focusing and maintaining a clutter-free work area are other ways to avoid injuries. But if cuts still occur, treat them right away.

Here are a few tips on the care of minor wounds:

- Wash your hands and avoid putting your mouth near or on the wound.
- Hold a sterile pad or clean cloth firmly over the wound until the bleeding stops.
- Gently cleanse the wound and surrounding skin with soap, cool water, and a soft cloth. Try not to get soap (or other irritants, like hydrogen peroxide) in the wound itself.
- Apply an over-the-counter antibiotic ointment, as long as you're not sensitive to any ingredients.
- Cover the wound. Change bandages as needed to keep the wound clean and dry.
- If the cut is especially deep or wide, it won't stop bleeding after 20 to 30 minutes, it was caused by a rusty object, or still has debris you can't remove, seek medical attention immediately.



Don't let a small cut turn into a big problem!

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OSHA corner

New alliance aims to prevent serious injuries and fatalities

In September, OSHA joined the American Industrial Hygiene Association, American Society of Safety Professionals, National Safety Council, and the Construction Safety Research Alliance in **a new alliance focused on preventing serious injuries and fatalities, referred to as SIFs**.

Through the alliance, the organizations will work together to develop shared messaging, educational resources, and effective training programs that will raise awareness and help workplaces better identify and prevent incidents most likely to result in life-altering injuries and fatalities. While OSHA has longstanding collaborative relationships with the first three alliance partners, the Construction Safety Research Alliance brings additional expertise through its research-based work on SIF prevention in the construction industry.

Read the alliance agreement for more details and how this collaboration could impact our shared goal to ensure that every worker returns home safe at the end of their shift.



Alliance signing