



FACT SHEET

SAFEWORK NSW

MACHINE SAFETY – GUIDE FOR OPERATORS

Every year thousands of workers in NSW who use machinery suffer horrific and life-changing injuries.

Lack of controlling risks at the design stage, lack of maintenance, lack of training and improper use of machinery are the frequent causes of fatalities, amputations, manual handling injuries, crush injuries, burns and fractures to the fingers, hands and arms.

But all these injuries are preventable!

Ask yourself 'Could the people around me or can I get injured when operating the machine?'

YOU CAN BE INJURED OR SUFFER HEALTH EFFECTS WHEN YOU OPERATE MACHINES IF

- Your hands, feet hair and other parts of your body can reach hazardous moving parts of the machine.
- You are required to make adjustments whilst the machine is moving.
- You are required to clear away product, waste or scrap whilst the machine is moving.

- You are exposed to noise, dust, fumes or radiation.
- You access confined or difficult to reach spaces, or you work at heights on a machine without fall prevention.
- You are manually transferring materials, for example; heavy items or awkward postures.
- You are exposed to chemicals while using or cleaning machines.
- Water could enter the electrical parts of machines, for example; cleaning or other purpose.

COMMON EXAMPLES OF IMPROPER USE

You are at a greater risk of injury if the machine is not being used properly, for example:

- ✗ Using machines with missing or inadequate guards, for example, to speed up production.
- ✗ Guard interlocks are overridden or missing allowing the guard to remain open while the machine is still moving.
- ✗ Doing cleaning or maintenance work without following the procedures for isolation and lock-out.

- ✗ Doing inspection or maintenance work without locking or supporting items that can move unexpectedly, for example; due to loss of pressure.
- ✗ Safety controls are misused. For example, emergency stop buttons being used to start and stop machines.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

If you believe that you or other workers could be injured when working with machines at your workplace:

- Talk to your employer or health and safety representative (HSR) about your concerns or if you are unsure how to safely operate a machine.
- Participate by helping to identify and resolve issues.

You must:

- Take reasonable care for your health and safety.
- Take reasonable care that your actions do not adversely affect health and safety of others.
- Comply with reasonable instructions, if you are reasonably able to do.
- Comply with reasonable policies and procedures communicated to you.

SIMPLE SAFETY TIPS FOR OPERATORS

- ✓ Only use a machine if you have been trained and your employer authorises you to operate it.
- ✓ Always follow the operating procedures for setting-up, operating, cleaning and maintaining the machine.
- ✓ If there are difficulties following the procedures discuss these with your supervisor.
- ✓ Where necessary, tie your hair back, or wear a hairnet, or beanie and wear close fitting clothing to avoid entanglement in a machine.
- ✓ Do not wear gloves or loose clothing when operating equipment such as drills or lathes which can draw you into the machine.
- ✓ Do not use the machine if guards have been removed.
- ✓ Do not use the machine if the interlocks are not working.
- ✓ Do not remove guards or override safety devices including interlocks.
- ✓ If required, conduct a pre-start check prior to using machinery to confirm it is safe to use.
- ✓ Where guards are adjustable, adjust them to provide the best protection when doing the job.
- ✓ Avoid bending, twisting, lifting heavy weights and repetitive movements that could cause a manual handling injury – discuss these issues with your supervisor or HSR
- ✓ Follow instructions, safe operating procedures and signage, and wear the required personal protective equipment, such as safety glasses and ear muffs.
- ✓ Keep the area around the machine clean and tidy to prevent slips and trips.

For further information refer to:

- *Code of practice – Managing the risks of plant in the workplace* (catalogue No. SW08839), SafeWork NSW
- *Machinery and equipment safety – an introduction, working across borders*
- *Dangerous machines safety checklist*, WorkSafe Victoria
- www.safework.nsw.gov.au
- call 13 10 50.

DANGER
**DO NOT OPERATE
 WITHOUT GUARDS
 IN PLACE**



Disclaimer

This publication may contain information about the regulation and enforcement of work health and safety in NSW. It may include some of your obligations under some of the legislation that SafeWork NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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