

## Don't Be OSHA's ATM

Bench grinders are jokingly called the "OSHA ATM." If an OSHA compliance officer sees one at your workplace, you can bet they are going to inspect it. Keep it guarded! These are the most cited infractions:

- Side guards cover the nut, spindle, flange, and 75% of the wheel diameter
- Work rest kept adjusted to 1/8" from the wheel
- Tongue guard kept adjusted to 1/4" from the wheel
- Max RPM for wheel & grinder match
- Surrounding area is clean
- Is grinder permanently mounted
- Are dust collectors or exhaust in place if needed?

OSHA 1910.215(a, b, & d)

**Guarding** – protecting the operator and the work area from hazards created by ingoing nip points, rotating parts, flying chips and sparks. Some examples of this are barrier guards, light curtains, two-hand operating devices etc. Guards must not create potential hazards and must be attached to the machine where possible.

OSHA 1910.212(a)



## The Importance of Machine Guarding

### Or, How to Keep Your Fingers Attached to Your Hands

Machine guarding is not something that we tend to think about much. It's usually only discussed or brought up when it's missing, or something terrible happens. However, machine guarding is an important part of creating and keeping a work environment safe. According to OSHA, machine operators suffered approximately 18,000 amputations, lacerations, crushing injuries, abrasions, and over 800 deaths in 2020.

There are three main areas to every machine.

**Point of Operation** – Where the machine performs the work on the material; the blade on a saw for example.

**Power Transmission Apparatus** – The components that transmit the energy to the point of operation; belts, pulleys, shafts, gears, chains, flywheels, etc.

**Operator Controls** – Electrical or mechanical controls that allow the operator to cut power to the point of operation, without leaving the control area.

Each of these should use one more guarding method.

**Fixed Guards** – guards that are permanently attached to a machine. Servicing the guard requires disassembly of the machine. An example is the guard around a sprocket and drive chain.

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**Self-Adjusting Guards** – These guards are designed to automatically adjust to the size of material being fed into the machine. An example is a guard covering a radial arm saw blade.

**Adjustable Guards** – Similar to self-adjusting, but require the operator to adjust them to the correct size. For example, the guard on a band saw. Improper adjustment can cause serious injury.

**Interlocks** – These guards must be engaged in order for the machine to operate. Disengaging them causes the machine to stop, or not operate. Interlocks are common when working with machines where the guard must be moved, or removed, in order to get material to the point of operation. (FYI - Interlocks are never considered an acceptable lockout point).

Never remove guards unless the machine has been locked and tagged out of service. *And, NEVER operate a machine without the guards in place.*

The guard is there for a reason; to keep you and your appendages safe. If a guard is removed in order to service a machine, it must be re-installed prior to unlocking the machine and returning it to normal operation.