Machine Guard Hazards

Guard Against Machine Hazards
Before you operate any machine you must be authorized and know how to operate it safely. An inspection of all equipment should be done before any machine is turned on. Items to be inspected prior to the operation of a machine will vary with the type of machine. Some items to check for include:

- Proper placement and good condition of machine guards
- Electric lines to see that they are not damaged.
- Air lines and hydraulic lines to see that they are in good condition and not leaking.
- Proper setup and operating speed of the machine.
- Material to be machined to see that it is properly secured to the machine.
- Cutting tools on the machine to see that they are sharp and properly secured in the tool holders.

Many machines have rotating parts, such as conveyor belts, spindles, chucks, saw blades, and drills. Some machines also have pinch points, cutting action, punching action and shearing action. A machine operator needs to be familiar with these hazards and know how to operate the machine in order to avoid injury from these hazards.

Machine operators should protect themselves from machine hazards by wearing proper protective equipment. Safety glasses and face shields or goggles should be worn where machines cause particles to fly through the air, such as chips coming from a lathe or grinder. Loose clothing should not be worn around rotating machinery because it can get caught in the machine and pull the machine operator into the machine.

Long hair should be contained so it will not get caught in rotating machine parts. Safety shoes are recommended where people are placing heavy materials in and out of machines. Avoid wearing shirts with laces or ties and jewelry such as rings and necklaces.

The area around machines should be kept orderly. Good housekeeping is important. Scrap material, chips and cuttings should not accumulate. Keep air hoses and extension cords out of the way so they don't become tripping hazards.

Make sure to do your part to keep machines properly repaired, lubricated and adjusted. All of the switches and valves that control machines should be clearly marked. Check your machine for emergency stop switches; they should be located on or near the machine so the machine can be turned off quickly if a malfunction occurs.