

Machines, Tools & Equipment

Employees work with machines, tools and equipment every day. Workplaces couldn't operate without them; however, interacting with them has potential for serious injuries or fatalities if they are not used and maintained properly.

The potential hazards are numerous, and include
Safety hazards

- Contact with moving parts
- Contact with electricity, heat, fire, cold, and other energies
- Contact with pressurized gas or liquid

Health hazards

- Contact with harmful chemicals or biological hazards
- Contact with harmful noise, radiation, and/or vibration
- Exposure to ergonomic or MSD hazards



What the law says

Workplace machine safety law in Ontario is based on the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). Regulations specified under the Act that are applicable to specific workplaces.

In the Act, the sections dealing with responsibilities of employers (s.25), supervisors (s.27) and workers (s.28) set out general duties with respect to machine safety.

How machines, tools and equipment safety can affect your business

A safe environment is a productive workplace. **Health and safety is not simply a legal obligation: it is a business opportunity.** You can boost your bottom line by improving health and safety performance, which reduces the costs associated with avoidable losses and lost-time injuries, and leads to higher productivity.

What you can do

Machinery and other workplace equipment can be dangerous if not used properly. Anyone using equipment in the workplace needs to be thoroughly trained in its operation and kept up to date. Here are other ways to help staff stay safe when using equipment.

- Keep the work area clean, tidy, well swept/washed, and well lit; floors should be level and have a non-slip surface
- Do not remove any guarding devices; make sure that they are in position and in good working condition before operating
- Follow lock-out procedures before measuring, cleaning or making any adjustments
- Check and adjust all safety devices before each job
- Wear appropriate personal protective gear as prescribed, including CSA-approved safety glasses with side shields (prescription eye wear is *not* a substitute)
- Ensure that all cutting tools and blades are clean and sharp; they should be able to cut freely without being forced
- Ensure there is enough room around the machine
- Ensure that all stationary equipment is anchored securely to the floor
- Keep hands away from the cutting head and all moving parts
- Avoid awkward operations and hand positions: sudden slips could cause the hand to move into the cutting tool or blade
- Do not leave machines unattended: turn the power off

- Avoid distracting an operator; horseplay can lead to injuries
- Avoid wearing loose clothing, gloves, neckties, rings, bracelets or other jewelry that can become entangled in moving parts; confine long hair; do not use rags near moving parts of the machine
- Return all portable tooling to their proper storage place after use
- Clean all tools after use
- Do not use cutting fluids to clean hands
- Use a vacuum, brush or rake to remove any cuttings
- Do not use compressed air to blow debris from machines or from worker clothes