

Occupational Amputations



Illinois Center for Injury Prevention

Facts

An amputation occurs when a protruding body part is partially or fully lost.

Work-related amputations are serious and preventable, mostly by controlling workplace hazards.

Hazards

Machine components that present amputation hazards:

- Point of operation - the area of a machine where it performs work on material.
- Power-transmission apparatuses - flywheels, pullets, belts, chains, couplings, spindles, cams and gears, in addition to connecting rods and other machine components that transmit energy.
- Other moving parts - machine components that move during machine operation such as reciprocating, rotating and transverse moving parts, as well as auxiliary machine parts.

Mechanical Motions that are hazardous:

- Rotating
- Reciprocating
- Transversing
- Cutting
- Punching
- Shearing
- Bending

Prevention Methods

Employers should recognize, identify, manage and control amputation hazards commonly found in the workplace.

Work practices, employee training and administrative controls can help prevent and control amputation hazards.

Machine safeguarding is the best way to control amputations cause by stationary machinery. The following are ways to safeguard equipment:

- **Guards** provide physical barriers that prevent access to hazardous areas. They should be secure and strong. Workers should not be able to bypass, remove or tamper with them. Guards should not obstruct the operator's view or prevent employees from working.
- **Devices** help prevent contact with points of operation and may replace or supplement guards. Devices can interrupt the normal cycle of the machine when the operator's hands are at the point of operation, prevent the operator from reaching into the point of operation or withdraw the operator's hands if they approach the point of operation when the machine cycles. They must allow for safe maintenance and not create hazards or interfere with the normal operation of the machine. They should be secure, tamper-resistant and durable.

Benefits and Impacts

Amputations are some of the most serious and debilitating workplace injuries. These injuries often impact workers and employers much more profoundly than other injuries. An amputation may greatly reduce a workers' job skills and earning potential, as well as significantly affect general quality of life.

Workers have the right to a safe workplace. Under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), there are standards that cover amputations in the workplace.

Contact Information

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