



Loss Control Insight

Feeling the Pinch in Accidents

Pinch points and hands are a painful combination. Pinch point accidents are common in the workplace, and they most often affect the hands.

A pinch point is a place where the hand (or even the entire body) can be crushed between two moving objects, or between a moving object and a stationary one.

Pinch point accidents can occur in any kind of workplace and any type of job. For instance, you can get your hand bruised in the pinch point between the cartons and the hand cart you are using to carry them. Or you can crush a finger by getting it caught between a roller and the belt as you stand beside a conveyor.

Slamming your hand in a drawer is a very common type of pinch point accident - and it can occur in any work area ranging from an office to a heavy industrial setting.

Getting caught and crushed between a wall and a heavy piece of moving equipment such as a forklift is a pinch point accident of the worst kind.

- Rollers and other rotating parts on machinery are very serious pinch point hazards. A hand can get caught between the rollers, and the person's whole body is then pulled through the machinery.

Here are some ideas for preventing pinch point accidents:

- Practice good job site housekeeping by keeping the place clean and orderly.

- Travel only in designated traffic lanes, and be constantly alert for moving machinery and vehicles.

- Never tamper with machine guards. In many instances, they protect you against pinch points in moving machinery and stock. Always replace a machine guard after making repairs or adjustments to the equipment.

- Follow your company's lockout/tagout procedures. These are designed to keep you from being injured by machinery that starts accidentally when you are doing adjustments or repairs. Pinch point accidents can occur this way.

- Secure materials so they cannot fall or roll. Stacked materials should be strapped, racked or interlocked so they cannot shift. Many serious pinch point accidents are the result of stored materials moving unexpectedly.

- Take care to avoid pinch point injuries when handling storage drums. Hands can easily be injured if they are crushed between the rims of storage drums as they are being moved.

- Beware of rolling hazards. This can include wheels on moving equipment, as well as stock such as stored pipe. Rolling hazards can cause crushing injuries.

- Know how to turn off machinery in your work area in case of an emergency - seconds count.

- Don't wear jewelry or loose clothing when you are working near moving equipment. You could get entangled and pulled into a pinch point. Even gloves can be a hazard around moving equipment.

- Keep long hair neat and away from machinery.

- Use door knobs and drawer handles, to prevent slamming your finger in a pinch point.

Pinch point hazards are responsible for countless minor but painful injuries. They are also the cause of many fatal accidents.