CrewSigned

Pinch Points Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

A pinch point is anywhere a part of your body can get caught between two objects when at least one of them is moving. It can be a machine, a door, a load, a tailgate or two pieces of pipe. Pinch points cause crushed fingers, broken hands and amputations, and they are everywhere on our jobs.

Some are easy to spot, like gears, rollers, belts and chains on machinery. Others are easy to miss. Think about a dumpster lid, a truck door, the gap between a load and a wall, a pallet being set down, a hinged ramp, a pipe being lowered into place, or the jaws of a vise. Anywhere something closes, rolls, folds or swings, there is a pinch point.

The first defense is guarding. Guards on machines keep your hands out of moving parts. Never remove a guard, wire it open or reach around it. If a guard is damaged or missing, the machine does not run until it is fixed. If you need to clear a jam or service equipment, shut it down and lock it out. Do not reach in and hope it stays off.

The second defense is awareness. Before you grab or guide something, look at where your hands will be when it stops moving. Keep them on the outside of the load, not underneath or between. Use handles, tag lines, push sticks and lifting tools so your fingers are not at the contact point. Watch for warning labels that mark pinch areas on equipment.

The third defense is communication. When two or more people move something together, one person calls the moves. Agree on when to lift, when to stop and when to set it down. Never let go of your end without warning the other person.

Gloves protect against scrapes and cuts, but they will not stop a crush. And around rotating parts, gloves, loose clothing, jewelry and long hair can get caught and pull you in. Tie hair back and lose the rings.

Finally, do not rush. Most pinch point injuries happen in the half second when someone reaches in to adjust or catch something. Let it go, stop the motion, then fix it.

Discussion questions

1. Point out three pinch points on the equipment or materials we are working with today.
2. Which guard on our equipment is most often left off or moved, and why?
3. When two people move a heavy object together, how do we make sure nobody's hands get trapped?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1910.212, General requirements for all machines
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.212

SOURCES

Amputations QuickCard (OSHA 3204): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA-AMPUTATIONS.pdf
Amputations: Safeguarding Equipment and Protecting Employees from Amputations (OSHA 3170): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3170.pdf
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Machine Guarding: https://www.osha.gov/machine-guarding

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Pinch Points Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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