

Plastics Product Manufacturing - Injuries From Mechanical Hazards

Nearly 70 workers were seriously injured from being caught in, under, or between machinery or equipment in 2000-2004



Interlocking devices on the operators gate prevent the machine from working while the operator reaches in to pull a part from a mold.

These injuries were so serious, workers had to take an average of 100 days off work to recover, or in some cases were permanently disabled. These serious injuries are costly and affect your industrial insurance premiums. They contribute to the reason for the average base rate of \$.73 per employee per hour paid by plastics manufacturing employers in 2006. If your company has a higher than average number of injuries (claims), your “experience rating” could increase by as much as 25% in one year. As a result, the premium you pay for each employee would increase from \$.73 to \$.90 per hour.

Stated another way, if you had 20 full-time employees and had an average number of injuries (claims) you would pay about \$29,000 in premiums in 2006. However if your experience rating increased by 25% due to higher than average injuries, you would pay an additional \$6,400 in premiums.

Causes of “caught in, under, or between” injuries

Workers who set up, operate, adjust, or maintain plastics production machinery are at risk for these types of serious injuries when:

- Appropriate safeguarding is lacking, not working properly, or has deteriorated.
- Workers don’t know how to safely perform production and maintenance tasks.

Ways to prevent these injuries

Identify mechanical hazards and provide the right type of safeguarding for each hazardous location on machinery and equipment.

- To find free publications that offer **detailed safeguarding solutions for specific plastics processing machinery**, follow the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) link from OSHA’s Hazard and Solutions webpage for the Plastics Industry: www.osha.gov/SLTC/plastics/recognition.html .

Train workers so they can:

- Know machinery and equipment nip-points, crush points, shear points, and other dangerous locations where moving parts can grab and injure the operator.
- Make sure established safeguards are in place and work properly at the start of every shift, and after any modifications made during production or maintenance. Use checklists, signs, and/or diagrams as visual reminders.
- Know what to do and who to contact when safeguards are missing, disabled, or defective.
- Use lock-, block-, and tag-out procedures and equipment appropriately where safeguarding alone can’t provide complete protection.