Machine Guarding – Landscaping Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

In the landscaping industry, workers regularly operate a variety of machinery, including lawnmowers, chainsaws, trimmers, woodchippers, and other power tools. While these machines are essential for efficient work, they also pose significant hazards, particularly when proper machine guarding is not in place.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

The dangers associated with unguarded or improperly guarded machinery in landscaping are numerous and can result in severe injuries or fatalities.

Specific Risks

1. **Contact with Moving Parts**
   - **Rotating Blades and Shafts:** Machinery such as lawnmowers, chainsaws, and trimmers have rotating blades or shafts that can cause serious injuries.
   - **Pinch Points and Nip Points:** Areas where two parts of a machine move together, such as the gears or pulleys, can trap and crush body parts, leading to severe injuries.
1. **Flying Debris**
   - **Ejected Materials:** Machines like woodchippers, lawnmowers, and trimmers can eject debris at high speeds, including rocks, wood chips, and other materials. This debris can cause eye injuries, cuts, or bruises if workers are not adequately protected.
   - **Broken Blades or Components:** Broken blades or belts, can become projectiles.
1. **Bypassing or Removing Guards**
   - **Intentional Removal:** Workers may remove or bypass guards for convenience, not realizing the increased risk of injury. This can lead to serious accidents.
   - **Inadequate Guards:** Poorly maintained guards do not provide sufficient protection.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Ensuring that all machinery is properly guarded is a critical step in preventing accidents and injuries in landscaping.

Understand Machine Guarding

1. **Types of Guards**

- **Fixed Guards:** These are permanent barriers attached to the machine to prevent access to moving parts.
- **Interlocked Guards:** These guards are designed to shut down the machine automatically if the guard is opened or removed.
- **Adjustable Guards:** These guards can be adjusted to fit different sizes of workpieces. They are typically used on machinery like saws.
- **Self-Adjusting Guards:** These guards move into place automatically as the worker begins operating the machine. They are often used on tools like circular saws or some types of trimmers.

1. **Proper Guard Installation**

- **Correct Positioning:** Ensure that guards are installed according to the manufacturer’s specifications, covering all hazardous areas completely.
- **Secure Attachment:** Guards should be securely attached to the machine, with no loose or missing fasteners.

Safe Work Practices

1. **Inspect Guards Regularly**

- **Pre-Use Inspections:** Before using any machine, conduct a thorough inspection to ensure that all guards are in place and functioning correctly.
- **Routine Maintenance:** Regularly inspect and maintain all guards.

1. **Never Bypass or Remove Guards**

- **Follow Procedures:** Never remove or bypass machine guards, even if it seems convenient.
- **Report Missing or Damaged Guards:** If you notice that a guard is missing or damaged, report it immediately.

1. **Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- **Wear Appropriate PPE:** In addition to machine guarding, always wear the appropriate PPE, such as safety glasses, gloves, and hearing protection, when operating or working near machinery.
- **Inspect PPE:** Regularly inspect your PPE for any signs of wear or damage.

Training and Awareness

1. **Training on Machine Guarding**

- **Comprehensive Training:** Ensure workers receive comprehensive training on machine guarding, including the types of guards, how they function, and their importance.
- **Hands-On Demonstrations:** Include hands-on demonstrations in your training to show workers how to properly inspect, maintain, and use machine guards.

1. **Encourage a Safety Culture**

- **Promote Safe Practices:** Encourage workers to prioritize safety by always using machine guards.
- **Lead by Example:** Supervisors and experienced workers should set a positive example by consistently using guards and following all safety protocols.

FINAL WORD

By ensuring that all equipment is properly guarded, conducting regular inspections, and providing comprehensive training, you can significantly reduce the risk of injuries on the job site.