

Develop Training Ltd has a long history of delivering training in safe systems of work to isolate and maintain electrical and mechanical systems.

For all equipment and machinery, large or small, whether it falls under a documented safety system or not, it is good to revisit the potential risks in mechanical safety such as;

- Faulty or missing machinery safeguarding.
- Broken or poorly maintained equipment.
- Poor training or instruction.
- Poor procedures for maintenance, breakdowns, cleaning or clearing of blockages.
- Poorly marked operating controls and ineffective emergency procedures.

DID YOU KNOW

In 2017 the Health and Safety Executive reported 44,000 non fatal injuries involving contact with moving machinery.

See the HSE website under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).

SAFEGUARDING MACHINERY

The Health and Safety Executive website describes a number of different ways of “safeguarding” machinery;

- Physical guards to remove the opportunity for contact with dangerous components.
- Interlocks to ensure operation can only be undertaken in a safe state.
- Two handed controls or trip systems incorporating photoelectric devices or pressure sensors.

THINK MECHANICAL SAFETY



MECHANICAL SAFETY

Awareness of mechanical safety doesn't end with larger plant where established safety systems would most likely include safety locks, caution signage and authorised and competent persons issuing and supervising permit to work systems.

All should be careful operating or starting machinery, taking time to check that they and their colleagues are safe. Many serious and fatal accidents include those unwelcome coincidences where machinery, pressure or electrical systems are re-energised just at the point someone begins to maintain or clean them, but it can just as easily be smaller items of plant or power tools where the safe condition is changed by someone else without the operators knowledge.

SAFETY GUARDS

Guards and interlocks should be checked before use. Check equipment is “complete” and that safety guards have not been removed or are faulty. Report all defects.

Never remove a safety guard or try to defeat a safety system.

All moving parts of machinery should be guarded, for example with wire cage or mesh. Components such as fans, rollers, conveyors, or power take off belts should not be accessible to hands or fingers.

SAFE ISOLATION

Ensure isolation is effective. Consider switching off an electrical supply to change a blade in a saw, only for a colleague to reinstate the power part way through!

Always adhere to safety systems, locks and caution signage, and always question why an electrical or mechanical system has been temporarily disabled by others, even if through poor practice. Ensure you cannot be working on equipment that is re-energised or put others at risk in the same way.

Watch out for moving parts that remain unguarded. Some accessible parts may have been missed in the design, particularly the back of fixed equipment, or from beneath where access was never envisaged. Just because you can get your hands in to clean or remove blockages, doesn't mean that you should.

GOOD PRACTICE

Always ensure you are trained to work with equipment and that it is in good condition, well maintained and fit for the task to be completed. Wear protective clothing as directed by risk assessments or manufacturers instructions. Be aware of emergency cut off switches and local emergency equipment.