

POWER PRESS SAFETY

Power operated presses are involved in thousands of accidents every year that could have been avoided with proper safe work practices. These accidents can be fatal and many incidents cause serious injuries such as broken bones and amputation.

- Why do power press accidents occur?
- How can power press accidents be prevented?
- What is required to safely operate a power press?

Causes of Power Press Accidents

The main causes of power press accidents are lack of training, lack of effective guarding, and bypassing of guards.

Untrained operators using complicated and potentially dangerous machinery are a threat to themselves and their coworkers. No employee is to operate a power press without training on safe operating techniques.

Guards between the operator and the point of operation must be designed to prevent the operator from reaching under the ram during the downward stroke. If guards are not used or not working properly, an accident is likely to occur.

Unsafe working conditions can be created if an employee attempts to bypass press guards and interlocks, or reaches in to clear a part while the press is running.

Prevent Power Press Accidents

Close cooperation between machine operators and management, perhaps through a labor/management health and safety committee with authority to inspect the workplace, will help prevent accidents.

Employers must ensure that power presses are operated and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Often, a manufacturer ships machinery without proper guarding. Therefore, the employer must ensure that proper guarding or safety devices, or both, are installed on a new power press before putting it into operation.

Employers must establish and follow a program of periodic and regular inspections of power operated presses to ensure that all parts, auxiliary equipment, and safeguards are in a safe operating condition and adjusted properly.

Employers must provide effective training to ensure employees who inspect and maintain power operated presses are competent to do so. Employers must also train operators on how to operate a power press safely before the operator begins any such work, and must provide adequate supervision to ensure the operators are following procedures correctly.

Power Press Safety Requirements

The regulations for power press safety are in California Code of Regulations, title 8, [sections 4189 through 4216](#). Sections [4202](#) and [4203](#) contain the requirements for regular inspections of machines and the training of operators discussed above.

The regulations specify the various types of guards and sensing devices that are required on presses. The types of guards permitted depend on the operation being performed.

In operations where stock is automatically fed into a progressive die and it is not necessary for the operator to reach under the ram, a fixed barrier guard can be used.

In secondary operations where there is danger of hands or fingers being caught in the press, various types of guards and point-of-operation devices can be used.

When cleaning, repairing, servicing, setting-up, and adjusting power presses, lockout/tagout procedures compliant with title 8 section [3314](#) must also be followed for protection against unexpected energization or startup of the machine.

Discussion Questions

- What types of guards are used on your machines?
- Do they comply with regulatory requirements?
- Are the guards recommended by the manufacturer of the press?
- Did the manufacturer install proper guarding and/or safety devices that comply with regulatory requirements?
- Are they effective?
- Can machine guarding and safety be improved in your shop?

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For assistance regarding power press safety, employers may contact Cal/OSHA Consultation Services at: 1-800-963-9424 or InfoCons@dir.ca.gov

For Consultation information, publications, and e-tools, access the following link or copy the site address: [DOSH Consultation www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html)

