



# Tool Guarding

Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions. Find more Toolbox Talks on the [Occupational Safety web page](#).

## General Information

Tool guards come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. They are all designed to protect the operator and bystanders from hazards associated with the equipment.

## What are tool guards?

- Tool guards are a physical barrier placed between a hazard and an operator.
- Guards are commonly constructed out of steel or thick, transparent plastic in areas where visual contact with a part is required.
- Guards are designed and tested to meet regulatory requirements by the manufacturer.
  - They should not be modified or built unless no other options are available.



## When and where are guards required?

- Guards are required when operating tools or equipment that have potential to cause injury to the operator or bystanders.
- Guards should cover moving parts and areas where projectiles can be generated.
  - Tools commonly equipped with guards include an angle grinder, bench grinder, circular saw, table saw, drill press, fan, and heat guns.

## Why do guards provide the best protection?

- Guarding provides superior protection because it does not require action from the user (passive protection).
  - Safety glasses are a form of active protection and should be used in conjunction with guards to prevent injury.

## Who can remove tool guards?

- Tool should not be operated without guards under any circumstance.
- If a guard must be removed for repair or maintenance, it should only be done by trained personnel.
- Tools should be disconnected from a power source prior to removing any guards.
  - Lockout/tagout (LOTO) may be required if a tool is wired directly to power.
- Guards should be reinstalled before the tool is returned to service.

**Discussion Date:**

**Supervisor:**

**Participants:**

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