

WOODWORKING SECTOR: AMPUTATIONS IN WOODWORKING

In the woodworking sector, the use of bandsaws, circular saws and other machinery feature heavily in everyday work. MOM conducted an enforcement operation in 2018, and found common contraventions relating to lack of machine guarding, failure to implement lock-out procedures during maintenance and repair, as well as inadequate risk assessment. It is important for employers and supervisors to identify and eliminate machinery risks and communicate the safe use of machinery to their employees. In doing so, your employees are better equipped to tackle the risks and any situations that occur in the process of work.

Source: Media Report, 21 June 2018, MOM 50 enforcement actions taken against companies in enforcement operation targeting machinery safety and amputation hazards

CASE STUDY OF AMPUTATION IN A WOODWORKING FACTORY

The injured used the table saw for cutting the groove on the bottom panel of a timber door frame. Instead of using a push stick, he used his hands. This resulted in his fingers meeting the rotating saw blade of the table saw amputating his third and fourth fingers.



Table saw involved in the accident



Injured fingers after the accident



To cut the groove (highlighted in red) for installing bottom panel of timber door frames



Table saw guard was available but was removed prior to the accident

Lessons Learnt:

- Check if the machine is appropriate for the job. In this case, consider safer methods to cut the groove for the bottom panel of the timber door frames instead of using the table saw. Proper equipment such as a router may be used, which are designed to cut grooves effectively.
- Use fixed guards to enclose dangerous parts. Guards should not be removed during operation, without other effective safeguards in place.
- Establish and implement safe work procedures and ensure machinery operators are equipped with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision.

To better assist companies in ensuring employees' safety and health at work, the WSH Council has developed several resources such as guidelines, case studies, checklists.

WSH COUNCIL MATERIALS FOR WOODWORKING COMPANIES

1. [WSH Guidelines on Safe Use of Machinery](#)
2. [Checklist for Working Safely with Machines](#)
3. [6 Handy Tips for Safe Hands](#)
4. Look. Think. Do. – 6 Basic WSH Rules for Working with Machines ([English](#), [Mandarin](#))
5. [Look. Think. Do. – 6 Basic WSH Rules for Woodworking](#)
6. [SS 537: 2009 Code of Practice for Safe Use of Machinery – Part 2 Woodworking Machinery](#)