

OSHA COMPLIANCE MANUAL

A STRAIGHTFORWARD RESOURCE EXPLAINING OSHA'S WORKPLACE GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY, INSPECTION, TRAINING AND MORE. USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OSHA REGULATIONS, THIS MANUAL SHOULD SERVE AS AN EFFECTIVE GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING SAFETY AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS IN YOUR WORKPLACE.

Meat-cutting band saws | Safeguarding for Specific Types of Machinery

Band saws can cut wood, plastic, metal, or meat. These saws use a thin, flexible, continuous steel strip with cutting teeth on one edge, that runs around two large motorized pulleys or wheels. The blade passes through a hole in the work table where the operator feeds the stock. Blades are available with various teeth sizes, and the saws usually have adjustable blade speeds.

Unlike band saws used in other industries, meat-cutting band saws are usually constructed of stainless steel for sanitary purposes and for easy cleaning. The table, which may slide or roll, has a pushing guard installed to protect the operator while feeding the saw. Meat-cutting band saws may also be equipped with a fence and pushing guard to feed the meat through the band saw.

Meat-cutting band saw hazards

Amputations occur most frequently when operators' hands contact the running saw blade while feeding meat into the saw. The risk of amputation is greatest when operators place their hands too close to the saw blade, in a direct line with the saw blade, or beneath the adjustable guard during feeding operations. Here are some common causes of amputations involving meat-cutting band saws:

- The operator's hand slips off the meat or otherwise accidentally runs through the blade.
- The operator attempts to remove meat from the band saw table while the blade is still moving.
- The operator's gloves, jewelry, or loose-fitting clothing became entangled in the saw blade.

Case History

An operator amputated the tip of his right ring finger while using a band saw to cut 1/4-inch slabs of meat from a 4-inch thick piece of beef. As the piece of meat got smaller, his hands moved too close to the saw blade. The employee was not using the pusher guard provided for the saw.

Source: OSHA IMIS Accident Investigation Database

Meat-cutting band saw

Engineering controls you can use include the following:

- Install a guard over the entire blade, except at the working portion, or point of operation of the blade. The guard must be adjustable to cover the unused portion of the blade above the meat during cutting operations.
- Enclose the pulley mechanism and motor completely.
- Install a brake on one or both wheels to prevent the saw blade from coasting after the machine shut off.
- Provide a pushing guard or fence to feed meat into the saw blade.

Work practice and administrative controls

The following work practice and administrative controls will help ensure safety in your workplace:

- Develop and implement safe operating procedures for meat-cutting band saws to ensure the guards are adequate and in place and that operators safely perform feeding methods. Conduct periodic inspections of the saw operation to ensure compliance.
- Ensure that all operators receive adequate on-the-job training under the direct supervision of experienced operators until they can work safely on their own.
- Instruct operators to adjust the point of operation guard to admit only the meat.
- Instruct operators to use the pushing guard or fence to feed the saw, especially when cutting small pieces of meat.
- Instruct operators to use only sharp meat-cutting blades and to tighten blades to the appropriate tension.
- Instruct operators not to wear gloves, jewelry, or loose-fitting clothing while operating a band saw and to secure long hair in a net or cap.
- Prohibit operators from removing meat from the band saw while the saw blade is still moving.
- Instruct operators to turn off and unplug band saws when not in use or when left unattended for any period of time.
- Instruct employees to perform servicing and maintenance activities under an energy control program in accordance with §1910.147.

If the band saw is a cord and plug connected equipment for which exposure to the hazards of unexpected energization or start up of the equipment is controlled by the unplugging of the equipment from the energy source and by the plug being under the exclusive control of the employee performing the servicing and maintenance, §1910.147 does not apply.