

SAFETY MOMENT

September 2023 – Potential Entanglement Injuries



Long hair and loose clothing, if not securely restrained, can become contaminated by your work, or worse, can become caught in unguarded moving/spinning parts of equipment that is operated either by you or someone nearby. An entanglement injury is one that results from clothing, hair, jewellery, a necktie or scarf, or other accessories becoming snagged by a movable/spinning part of workplace machinery, such as a motor drive shaft, lathes, mixers, small centrifuges. Injuries can include amputation of a body part (e.g. the hand if a bracelet or loose-fitting gloves are caught, or the whole limb if a cuff is caught), degloving of a finger (e.g. if a ring is caught), strangulation (e.g. a necktie, necklace or scarf is caught) and partial or whole scalping if the hair is caught (including long beards). Some of these injuries can be fatal especially if they lead to massive blood loss and shock.

The potential for these hazardous situations should be identified in your Risk Management Forms and the means to work safely embedded into your Safe Work Procedure. Warning information should be part of the area's safety poster and the equipment itself.

Before entering a space that has such equipment:

- **Jewellery:** All jewellery should be removed. In particular, necklaces, bracelets, and long earrings.
- **Clothing:** Remove jackets and remove or secure all loose clothing. Do up sleeve cuffs and if you can't, do not wear that item of clothing (e.g. oversized jumpers or PPE with loose or large cuffs). Make sure all front buttons/zippers are fastened, lab coats are done up, and all gown ties are properly fastened at the back. Gloves should be tight-fitting or perhaps removed.
- **Long hair:** If your hair can fall forward of your face then it must be securely restrained behind your head so that it can't fall forward of your face. Tying hair into a ponytail or plait may not be sufficient if the hair is long and can still fall forward on your face. You will need to further secure it, such as into a bun, or consider wearing a hairnet/cover. Similarly, long beards should be netted and held up close to the chin, away from the moving parts.

