Anyone operating a machine, such as those commonly found in shops, is at risk for injuries ranging from amputations, lacerations, crushing injuries, or even death. Installing machine guards can prevent machine-related injuries and fatalities. If you have to use machines like saws, drill presses, sanders, abrasive wheels, lathes, fans, or similar machines, machine guards can potentially save your life. Never remove them!

**What are machine guards?**

Machine guards are designed to protect the machine operator and others nearby from moving parts and hazardous motions/actions. There are different types of guards that keep the operator or others nearby from the machine's danger zone:

- **Fixed barriers** - cannot be moved/adjusted and prevent contact with the danger zone. Examples: cage enclosure of fan blades and band saw blade guard.

  ![Fixed barriers example](image1)

  ![Fixed barriers example](image2)

- **Interlocked guard** - trips or deactivates the power mechanism or disengages the moving parts when the guard is removed or opened. Example: electrical detection and brake system for SawStop® table saws.

  ![Interlocked guard example](image3)

- **Adjustable guard** - adjustable barriers that allow the operator to use various stock sizes. Examples: adjustable guards for the bandsaw's blade, and disc sanders, and jig saw.

  ![Adjustable guard example](image4)

  ![Adjustable guard example](image5)

- **Self-adjusting guard** - automatically adjusts the opening of the barrier based on the size and movement of the stock being fed into the opening. Example: self-adjusting guard of table saw.

  ![Self-adjusting guard example](image6)

Please contact your shop technician or Katherine Perkins (perkinsk@newschool.edu), Environmental Health and Safety Office of Facilities Management, if you have any questions about the information on this sheet.

For more information on any health issue, contact Wellness and Health Promotion, Student Health Services at wellness@newschool.edu or 212.229.1671, option 4.

Safety Tips were made possible by The New School Occupational Safety Work Group.