

Workplace Health and Safety Hazard Alert

Metal Lathes

15 May 2012

Issue/Incident:

- A student was injured after coming into contact with a metal rod whilst it was rotating in a metal lathe. The metal rod deflected and was ejected from the machine hitting a window frame and door jam and then rebounding, striking the student's head and hand.
- As a result of the incident the student sustained lacerations to the forehead (above the eyebrow) and hand.

Factors/Risks to Consider:

- Failure to complete a risk assessment for the task.
- Location of lathe at the front entrance of the room causing the rod to protrude across the doorway.
- Absence of barriers to prevent students entering the work area.
- Inadequate guarding - the machine did not have a chuck guard installed.
- Failure to follow safety instructions.

Recommendations:

Schools should implement the following controls in relation to metal lathes:

- Conduct a risk assessment using the [Plant and Equipment Risk Management Form](#) for all metal lathes in their workplace and document appropriate [Safe Work Procedures](#).
- Display Safe Work Procedure next to the metal lathe.
- Ensure that a chuck guard with interlocking is installed.
- Ensure that metal lathes are positioned in areas that have little or no traffic.

Workplace Health and Safety Hazard Alert

- Where bar stock is required to protrude through the outer headstock spindle ensure suitable pedestrian barriers are in place and a risk assessment has been conducted especially with the length and diameter of bar stock in mind.
- Ensure that suitable barriers are in place to prevent students not using the lathe from entering the area unnecessarily and that students using the lathe are adequately supervised.
- Ensure employees and students understand and follow the Safe Work Procedure for Metal Lathes and are deemed competent in the use of the metal lathe.
- Ensure appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn whilst operating the lathe e.g. safety glasses.

Photo one: example of barrier



Photo two: example of headstock spindle cover



Workplace Health and Safety Hazard Alert

Photo three: example of metal lathe with chuck guard



Photo four: side view of chuck guard with interlock



Further Information:

Further information can be obtained from DEECD's [Health, Safety and WorkSafe](#) website or by contacting the DEECD OHS Advisory Service on **1300 074 715** or email safety@edumail.vic.gov.au .