



## Accidents involving use of emery cloth tape on metalworking lathes

The purpose of this alert to highlight the hazards of using emery cloth tape on metalworking lathes. Emery cloth tape is used to achieve a cosmetic finish or to resize a work piece under rotation.

### Background

Two workers have suffered fractures and lacerations to their wrists and arms while using emery tape on metal working lathes.

In both incidents, the workers were drawn into the revolving work piece, causing them to become entangled.

### Contributing factors

- Both workers were wearing gloves
- Inappropriate length of emery tape, enhancing risk of entanglement
- Both workers were using the tape in a forward and backward motion
- Using a forward and backward motion can cause a brake band effect, where the emery tape becomes slack and wraps back on the work piece, drawing the operator in
- Both operators were competent tradesman, and it is apparent that entanglement incidents of these types can occur regardless of the level of experience

### Action required

1. Ensure that risk assessments are carried out to identify, assess and control all hazards to which operators are likely to be exposed.
2. Consider alternative methods for a sizing operation, this can be successfully performed in a dedicated polishing, finishing or grinding machine.
3. Where emery cloth is needed, consider using a backing board or mounting the cloth on a purpose-designed tool to minimise entanglement.
4. As a general principle, wearing gloves when operating rotating machinery should not be allowed.

### Further information

Information on guarding (Code of practice Safeguarding of machinery and plant 2009) can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au)

Further information regarding plant and machinery operated in your workplace can be obtained from the manufacturers operating manuals.

A14009498

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