Caught Between: Avoiding ‘Strike,-Caught,-Crush’ Injuries with Equipment Meeting Kit



WHAT’S AT STAKE

Working around moving equipment, heavy machinery, and powered tools means you’re constantly near pinch points, rotating parts, swinging arms, and tight spaces where the smallest mistake can trap, strike, or crush a worker in seconds. These injuries are often severe because machines don’t stop instantly — and once something pulls you in, there’s rarely time to react.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Strike-, caught-, and crush-injuries happen fast — usually in the split second when a worker gets too close to move equipment or when a machine starts unexpectedly. The danger isn’t just the size or power of the equipment; it’s how quickly everything happens. When heavy parts swing, rotate, slide, or drop, there’s no time to pull away, and the force involved can cause severe or even fatal injuries.

Moving Parts That Don’t Stop Quickly

Equipment like loaders, forklifts, conveyors, compactors, and press machinery take time to slow down. If you get caught in a pinch point or struck by a moving part, that delay can make the injury far more severe.

Unsafe Approaches and Tight Work Areas

Working too close to machines, stepping between vehicles and walls, or entering narrow spaces increases the risk of being pinned or crushed. In many incidents, workers underestimate how little clearance they have.

Unexpected Machine Activation

Machines can start automatically, restart after a pause, or move without warning due to sensors, controls, or operator action. These unexpected movements can trap or strike anyone in the wrong place at the wrong time.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Staying safe around moving equipment comes down to giving machines the space they need, staying alert to unexpected motion, and keeping your body out of danger zones.

Equipment doesn’t think, hesitate, or feel — it just moves with whatever force it was designed to apply. Protecting yourself means staying predictable, visible, and never putting yourself in a position where a machine can trap or strike you.

Keep a Safe Distance from Equipment

Machines need room to operate, turn, and stop. Stand clear of moving parts, rotating arms, reversing vehicles, and tight areas where equipment and fixed objects meet. If you have to approach, make eye contact with the operator and wait for a clear signal before stepping in.

Use Lockout/Tagout and Stay Out of Danger Zones

Never reach into machinery, clear jams, or place hands near pinch points unless the equipment is fully locked out. Even a small shift or restart can trap fingers, hands, or arms instantly.

What to Do Around Moving or Unexpectedly Active Equipment

- Stay visible — avoid blind spots around loaders, forklifts, and trucks.
- Move slowly and keep predictable movements so operators know where you are.
- Keep guards, barriers, and protective devices in place.
- Never step between equipment and walls, pallets, or other fixed objects.
- Assume a machine can restart at any time unless locked out.

Communicate Clearly and Don’t Rush

Always signal your intentions, use radios or hand signs when needed, and confirm operators see you before you enter their work zone. Rushing near heavy machinery is one of the most common causes of caught-between injuries — slow, deliberate movement is safer every time.

FINAL WORD

Machines don’t stop instantly, and they don’t give second chances. Staying alert, keeping a safe distance, and respecting danger zones are the simplest and most effective ways to avoid strike-, caught-, and crush-injuries.