
Long hair on the jobsite

Hazards: physical, caught in, entanglement, fire

Dangers of loose, long hair

Having long hair that is not properly secured can be extremely dangerous because it can become caught in moving machine parts or come in accidental contact with flames/heat.

Worker's hair or clothing becoming entangled in equipment, is a serious problem that can cause injuries such as scalping, facial disfigurement, amputations, and even death. These injuries are more common than you may think. After the hair becomes trapped or entangled within a moving piece of machinery it can be pulled with such force that it rips the scalp from the worker. This can happen so quickly that there is nothing the worker can do to stop it once the hair contacts the machine's moving parts.

The other common hazard associated with long hair is burns. Workers with long hair may not realize their hair is coming close to a heat source or flame which could set the workers hair on fire. Workers near heat sources should not use excessive amounts of flammable hair products such as hairspray as this increases the risk of it catching fire.

Thankfully, these types of injuries are easily prevented by properly securing hair.

OSHA regulations

OSHA has set forth regulations so that this type of accident can be prevented. When hazards are present that could entangle hair or set it aflame, employers are responsible for ensuring that their employees have securely fastened their hair. Employees are required to cover and protect long hair to prevent it from getting caught in machine parts such as belts, chain and rotating parts. Employees are also encouraged to pay close attention to work pieces that have slots or other surface profiles that may increase the risk of entanglement. They should keep clothing, loose jewelry and hair away from rotating and moving parts, as they may become caught. Some of these specific regulations may only be contained within the General Industry rulebook, however they can and are applied to Construction sites by use of the general duty clause.

Acceptable Hairstyles

Hair long than four inches can be drawn into machine parts such as suction devices, blowers, chains, belts and rotating devices. It can even be drawn into machines guarded with mesh. Therefore, hair must be securely fastened with a bandanna, hair net, soft cap or the like.

Securely fastened means that hair is tied back into a bun or a knot without any loose locks. Ponytails are acceptable for the most part, though if hair is extremely long, ponytails may still be blown into a machine part by the wind or sucked in when the worker bends down.

Site specific requirements:

Employee participants:

Date:
