(18) Safety Operation of Grinding Wheels [2]

Safety Guards

- All grinding wheels should feature safety guards or protection hoods. According to the United States Department of Labor, grinding wheel safety guards need to be durable enough to withstand the impact of a bursting grinding wheel. Grinding wheels can break without warning; safety guards keep broken fragments from injuring the operator. Side guards should cover a grinding wheel's spindle, flange, nut and about 75 percent of the diameter of the grinding wheel, according to Beacon Mutual Insurance.

Injury

- Wheel grinder operators always work with the risk of injury. Properly operating and maintaining wheel grinders greatly reduces the risk of injury linked with using them. According to Beacon Mutual Insurance, lacerations are the injury most commonly associated with wheel grinder accidents. Grinding wheels explode typically when a tool or piece of material gets stuck between the guard and the grinding wheel. Injuries to the groin and lower legs are common with wheel grinder accidents.

All grinding wheels feature a maximum operating speed provided by the manufacturer, never run grinding wheels at higher speeds than recommended by their manufacturers. Incorrectly or loosely holding a work piece against a wheel grinder can result in injury.

Personal Safety

- All wheel grinder operators should employ eye protection to prevent shards from a work piece flying off and severely damage the eyes. Eye goggles and hoods or shields are eye protection options. Clothing that comes in contact with the moving parts of a wheel grinder may get caught in the machine and cause injury. Do not wear neckties and loose clothing near active wheel grinders.

Components

- Not all grinding wheels are created equal; some grinding wheels are very brittle and can easily break if they are handled improperly, according to United States Department of Labor, consumers should be familiar with exactly what type of grinding wheel they are dealing with before attempting to operate the device.