



## BELT CONVEYOR GUARDING

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### Ergonomics & Guarding Go Hand in Hand

#### **How does Ergonomics relate to Guarding Conveyors?**

Defined - Ergonomics is matching the job to the worker and the product to the user. Ergonomic hazards refer to workplace conditions that pose the risk of injury to the musculoskeletal system of the worker. Ergonomic hazards include repetitive and forceful movements, vibration, temperature extremes, and awkward postures that arise from improper methods and improperly designed workstations, tools, and equipment.

*How does this have anything to do with guarding on conveyors?*

*Don't guards just prevent access to danger zones?*

To answer these questions we need to look at the life cycle of typical guarding. All guarding requires initial installation, either by the original manufacturer, outside contractors or by your in house workers. These guards are lifted and carried to the desired location, and fastened in position using some form of hardware. Routinely these guards are removed for housekeeping and maintenance activities as well as equipment repairs and modifications. All too often these activities are not factored into guarding design and functionality.

Workers should not have to:

- Struggle or Strain to handle heavy/awkward guards.
- Perform repetitive motions, such as tightening and loosening nuts or bolts.
- Carry a full tool box around to accommodate a variety of fasteners.
- **Risk injury due to poor design.**

**STAY AWAY - STAY SAFE**

## What Ergonomic factors should be incorporated into guards?

1. A single guard should weigh no more than 50 lbs. This allows lifting and installation by one person.
2. Mounting hardware should be easy to use and repetitive hand/finger movements should be minimized.
3. When possible, guards should have extra mounting holes that facilitate more than one mounting arrangement. The installer can then choose mounting points for easy access, and eliminate reaching.
4. Handles should be an option. Preferably handles with a universal mounting design so they can be mounted in any direction, anywhere on the guard. This will allow the installer to position the handles in the best possible location.
5. Guards should be installed as close as possible to the conveyor, eliminating obstructions in aisles and passage ways.

## What are the benefits of ergonomically friendly guards?

- Reduce the risk of workplace injuries.
- Improve productivity.
- Prevent costly downtime.
- Improve worker morale.
- Reduce absenteeism.
- *Workers will reinstall guards that are easy to use.*

## What are the most common work related injuries?

Most workplace injuries involve backs, shoulders, and necks. Poor lifting techniques, poor product design, and poor process design can contribute to musculoskeletal injuries. Consistent application of well designed products that are ergonomically friendly will help to reduce or eliminate these injuries. Manufacturers of poorly designed guards place all workers at risk of injury.

So, the next time you are looking to build or outsource guards, take the time to ensure ergonomics has been a factor in the design, and fabrication. Your safety record will improve and so will your bottom line.

**STAY AWAY - STAY SAFE**

## **Ergonomics & Guarding Go Hand in Hand**

We hope you have enjoyed this tip sheet on “Ergonomics” and now see that selecting the right supplier is critical to your success. Whatever your approach is to guarding, follow these tips and you will reduce worker injury, improve productivity, and comply with industry standards.

I would like to personally wish you great success in your guarding endeavors.

Sincerely,

Paul Vandergeest  
President

### **ON GUARD FOR YOU**

#### ***Guarding Basics***

If your conveyors need guarding, and you are interested in developing a Safety Guarding Plan, then contact Belt Conveyor Guarding to set up an appointment for your free Conveyor Guarding Assessment.

During your initial contact, we will take some time to get to know you and your specific requirements. Once we have a good understanding of your guarding challenges and objectives we will suggest guarding techniques that will quickly adapt to your needs.

Your assessment comes with no obligation to purchase our products or act on our recommendations, and we will not pressure you in any way. It will be your choice to take the next step, and if you choose not to, that’s okay with us.

Book your free Conveyor Guarding Assessment today by calling our toll free number 1-866-300-6668 or fill in our contact information sheet at:

[www.conveyorguarding.com/lpassess.htm](http://www.conveyorguarding.com/lpassess.htm)

With each guarding assessment we will also send you a **free Conveyor Pinch Point Gauge**.

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