

BWC SAFETY BULLETIN

Safety tips and resources for workers
who use augers



Auger Safety

Augers are common tools found in a variety of industries, and they can pose a significant danger to workers. Almost 10 serious injuries and fatalities related to auger use occur every year in Ohio.

In one recent case a worker was cleaning the back of a dump truck to remove road salt. He lifted the dump bed, which engaged the power take-off. This activated the salt spreader/auger, causing his arm to become entangled and leading to his death.

Another incident occurred at a wastewater treatment plant. After becoming blocked, the auger was left on "manual" (still moving) so it could be flushed with water to clear it. While the worker removed the sludge by hand, the auger caught the tip of his finger and amputated it.

What is an Auger?

An auger is a tool or device with a long screw-shaped shank. As the shank turns, it moves material through a trough or tube. Augers are commonly found in agriculture grain bins, salt spreaders, water treatment plants, and construction sites. Augers can be used to bore holes in the ground, lift grain, move materials into trucks, carry feed to cattle feeders, and transport wastewater.

Auger Hazards

Entanglements occur when hair, clothes, or limbs become caught on the screw, potentially resulting in cuts, fractures, or amputations. These are often caused by machines that lack proper guarding and protective barriers. Electrical shock from hitting live power lines while moving raised grain augers may result in severe injury or death. Improper maintenance and cleaning of augers can also lead to severe consequences.

How to Prevent Auger Accidents

Operation/Training

- Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry, and tie back long hair.
- Do not step or jump on or over an auger while it is in operation.
- Ensure good footing to prevent slipping or falling.
- Never use hands or feet to redirect the flow of materials into the auger.
- Use labeled barriers to stop persons not involved in an auger's operation from entering the area.
- Require training for all operators on proper operating procedures and all auger-related hazards.



Maintenance

- Place portable augers on dry, level ground or a gravel pad.
- Remove spilled grain between loads after the equipment has been turned off.
- Lower grain augers to the horizontal position before moving them from one location to another.
- Observe locations of power lines before raising an auger into position to avoid electrocution.
- Ensure all protective shields are in place and in good condition before starting an auger. Per [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) standards, certain augers require guards, as detailed in OSHA's standard for guarding farm equipment, [29 CFR 1928.57](#).
- Before service or repair, shut off the power, and lock and tag out the auger power source. For more information, refer to OSHA's lockout/tagout standard, [29 CFR 1910.147](#).

Note: This list does not represent all necessary precautions. Follow manufacturers' recommendations and comply with all safety standards.

If an Auger Accident Occurs:

- Shut the power off.
- Call for help.
- Apply direct pressure to the wound to stop the bleeding. If the wound is too far into the machine, apply pressure to the body between the bleeding site and the heart by pushing the artery against bone to stop bleeding until medical help arrives.

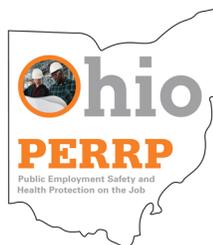
Have questions about safety? We can help. We provide virtual and on-site consultation services to employers at no additional cost. You can request our services at www.bwc.ohio.gov or by phone at **1-800-644-6292**.

We also offer the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program, which focuses on the unique safety needs of Ohio public employers (**1-800-671-6858**) and the OSHA On-Site Consultation Program, which focuses on safety and health assistance for small- to medium-sized, high-hazard private employers (**1-800-282-1425**).

Other resources

- [Emergencies and First Aid - Direct Pressure to Stop Bleeding by Harvard Health Publishing](#)
- ["Farm Worker Dies during Grain Bin Auger Entanglement" case study by the State of New York Department of Health](#)
- [Grain Auger Accidents by the Farm Injury Resource Center](#)
- [Auger and Elevator Accident Victim Rescue by the National Ag Safety Database](#)

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