



INTRODUCTION

To help with a product's uniformity, many food manufacturers will use an automated bar cutter to create bars of food. These cutters can be part of an entire system, such as rollers and formers or separate equipment pieces. Designs may also vary from workplace to workplace. Whichever model you use, improper use of the equipment could potentially expose you to harm. This lesson will cover the hazards associated with these pieces of equipment, personal protective equipment, and safe work practices that should be used when operating a cutter.

HAZARDS

When operating an automated cutter, you could potentially be exposed to one or more of the following hazards:

- Cuts or extremity amputation if you make contact with the blade, especially when it is in motion
- Pinch points. Areas where jewelry, long hair, loose clothing, and extremities can get caught
- Electrical shock or electrocution if electrical cabinets are open during operation or if the equipment has not been de-energized before performing maintenance on electrical components.
- Eye irritation or damage from flying fragments
- Burns from parts that may become heated from the equipment running
- Slipping, tripping, or falling from cords or spilled food that may be on the floor.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

You can minimize your chances of an accident occurring when operating or removing food from the equipment by wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE may include:

- Closed-toed shoes
- Safety glasses or goggles
- Gloves (Leather is recommended when you must touch parts of the machine that may have become hot)
- Tight-fitting clothing

PPE selection should be based on manufacturer-recommendations or requirements.

Before you put on your PPE, inspect it for wear or damage. Do NOT wear damaged PPE. Report damaged PPE to your supervisor.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

When operating an automated bar cutter, you should do the following:

- Tie back long hair and remove all jewelry.
- Allow only trained and authorized employees to operate the piece of equipment.
- Keep all other employees away from the machine.
- Become knowledgeable about emergency stop or shutdown procedures unique to the unit. If you have questions regarding specific procedures, consult either the operator's manual or speak with your supervisor.
- Inspect the unit for signs of malfunction or damage: report malfunctioning or damaged components to your supervisor.
- If the cutter is part of a production line, check that connections to other production pieces are secure.
- Additionally, you should inspect the blade to see if it is dull. Dull blades should either be sharpened or replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Do NOT operate a unit with a dull blade.
- If the blade has become damaged, report it to your supervisor and replace it with a new one.
- Check to make sure all manufacturer or third-party guards are in place and are secure. If guards were removed for inspection or maintenance tasks, verify that guards have been replaced before starting the equipment.
- Practice proper housekeeping by keeping the floors clear of all cords and immediately cleaning up spilled food from the floor.
- Additionally, keep our work area clean by removing all rags, scraps, and so on that could cause an accident from the equipment and surrounding work area.
- Operate the cutter according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Run the blade and conveyor belt at manufacturer-recommended speeds. Do NOT exceed the speed limits specified in the operator's manual.
- Keep hands away from moving parts of the machine. Never reach inside enclosures or guard doors while the machine is running.
- If you notice a component malfunctioning or hear any strange sounds, immediately stop the machine, and notify your supervisor.
- Clean the unit or components according to the manufacturer's instructions found in the provided manual.

Maintenance

Trained and authorized employees should complete all maintenance for the cutter. When performing maintenance, you should:

- Follow all company lockout/tagout procedures for the unit. This should include the blocking of pneumatic components to help prevent accidental movement.
- Use only manufacturer-supplied or manufacturer-recommended replacement parts in the piece of equipment.
- Keep all unauthorized employees away from the equipment.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, automated bar cutters can help keep products uniform during the cutting process. However, improper use and care of these equipment pieces can result in injury. To help minimize the chances of an accident occurring, you should operate and care for the cutter according to your company's policies and procedures. Remember that you play a role in maintaining safety in the workplace.