

HOW POOR SAFETY GUARDS IMPACTS MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

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When safety guarding is discussed, the conversation often focuses only on accident prevention. However, in day to day production, poorly designed guarding not only puts operators at risk, but also directly affects maintenance activities, equipment availability and overall operating costs. Inadequate safety guarding can become a constant obstacle for technical personnel and a silent source of operational inefficiencies.
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1.-Increased downtime:

Improvised or poorly planned guards often restrict access to critical components. Each intervention requires unnecessary disassembly, additional tools and more time to complete the task. This results in longer maintenance stoppages, increased pressure on maintenance teams and reduced equipment availability.



2.-Incorrect or unsafe access :

When a guard is not designed with real maintenance tasks in mind, technicians are often forced to work in uncomfortable or unsafe conditions. Narrow access points, blind spots or guards that are difficult to remove increase the risk during interventions. In many cases, this results in guards being removed and not properly reinstalled, leading to the repeated adoption of unsafe practices.

3.-Increased risk during maintenance activities:

Maintenance tasks represent one of the most critical phases in terms of safety. When guards are not properly designed, technical personnel are exposed to risks such as accidental contact with moving components, residual energy or poorly defined hazardous zones. Safety should not be limited to normal machine operation, it must remain effective throughout all stages of servicing and intervention.

Constant adjustments and non permanent solutions

When safety guarding is not designed under a well-planned engineering concept, it often becomes a rigid system that requires frequent modifications. Each process changes forces improvised adaptations such as cutting, welding or structural modifications, which gradually degrade the original solution. Over time, this leads to recurring rework, loss of standardization and the emergence of indirect costs that impact operations without always being obvious.



Direct impact on operational efficiency

When maintenance tasks become complex, slow or risky overall plant performance declines. Intervention time increases, unplanned downtime happens and operational continuity is compromised. Well designed safety guards do more than prevent accidents, they protect productivity, reduce interruptions and help maintain overall process stability.

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CONCLUSION

Poorly thought safety guarding goes beyond being a risk to operators and becomes an operational and maintenance burden. In contrast, investing in functional, well planned safety guards designed from an engineering perspective allows maintenance times to be optimized, improves working conditions for technical staff and ensures more reliable and efficient operation.

Properly implemented safety does not hinder operations, it structures them, simplifies them, and generates tangible long-term value for the plant.

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