



Don't get wrapped up in your work

The average person greatly underestimates the time it takes to safely complete a task, especially hazardous ones. This is one of the reasons why possums, and sometimes pedestrians are struck trying to cross a rural road with oncoming traffic, or truck drivers get hit by a train while trying to beat it to a railroad crossing. This inability to estimate time is also a significant contributor to farm workers being caught in operating machinery such as a PTO shaft spinning at 540 rpm. One of the most frequent comments made by survivors of these entanglement incidents is "I never realized how fast this could happen".

This demonstration simply involves a lace-up work boot or shoe on which the shoe lace has been replaced with a cord approximately 30 feet long. One end of the replacement lace should be about 12 inches long while the other end will be about 28 feet long. Leave the short end loose outside the footwear while the other end should be coiled up and stuffed inside, out of sight, until the demonstration.

Procedure:

1. Ask the participants how much shoelace would be wrapped up on a PTO shaft turning at 540 rpm in the three seconds it would take to respond to being caught. Some will argue that their response time is faster than 3 seconds while forgetting that entanglements rarely involve a warning. As with possums, human reaction times are simply slower than we think. (That is why there are so many dead possums on the highway.)
2. Once the guessing has stopped, have one participant take the long end of the shoelace, coiled up inside the footwear and stretch it out. He or she will have to walk nearly 28 feet away from the boot or shoe. That's how fast loose clothing can be wrapped up in a spinning shaft in just 3 seconds.

Materials Needed



Lace-up work boot with a shoe string (cord) that is 28 feet long on one side and 12 inches on the other side. The 28-foot-long string/cord should be coil and stuffed inside the boot with only the end extending

Once a worker's clothing becomes entangled, the potential of having arms and legs pulled in becomes very high.