

Reasons for attending GEAR EXPO include networking with colleagues and potential customers, but it also presents an opportunity to view new equipment and ask questions about its safety features.

In this issue of the magazine there is a special section devoted to GEAR EXPO. This, as we know, is the leading event for all of us in this industry. It is also the ideal location to expand your knowledge of common concerns for safety in the gear industry. Nowhere will you have a better opportunity to discuss realistic safety practices as they apply to our industry than at Cobo Hall in Detroit October 7-10. There will be representatives from all the major players in our industry who are the most knowledgeable as to your safety concerns, all gathered in one location. I realize that the main reason most of us attend this event is to review the latest advancements in our industry, but please do not neglect to keep the safety of your workforce in mind when you are examining these advancements. Discuss the safety aspects of the new equipment you are reviewing with the company representatives in the booths. They will be happy to address your concerns, and perhaps you can help them to produce an even safer product. Also, this is an ideal environment to discuss mutual safety concerns with your fellow attendees. Don't hesitate to question anyone when it comes to safety concerns, because we all have the same problems and welcome any input from others in our industry.


Another topic in this issue concerns the chamfering/deburring of gears. This subject strikes home with me, as I recently was discussing this very topic with a customer.

“DISCUSS THE SAFETY ASPECTS OF THE NEW EQUIPMENT AT GEAR EXPO WITH THE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES. THEY WILL BE HAPPY TO ADDRESS YOUR CONCERNS, AND PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP THEM TO PRODUCE AN EVEN SAFER PRODUCT.”

His concern was production oriented, of course, but I was quick to point out that the sharp burrs and edges on his product not only were unacceptable to his customers, but also dangerous to his employees. Deburring is an unpleasant fact of life in our industry. Unfortunately the process of cutting gears creates burrs upon breakout. Burrs, by their very nature, are very sharp and jagged. When you unload the freshly cut gears they are covered with coolant, which in turn makes them slippery. The combination of these factors makes unloading freshly cut gears an extremely hazardous situation. While burrs do not usually cause extreme cuts, they can be very irritating, and in combination with the coolant can be a cause of infection. What can be done to minimize this hazard? Many hobbing and shaping machine manufacturers offer attachments that will deburr the gears during the cutting cycle.

While these attachments do not work for every gear configuration, they go a long way toward minimizing the problem. There is also a ready availability of protective work gloves, and these gloves have come a long way in terms of their protective properties and being comfortable to wear. I would suggest equipping your employees with this type of glove for unloading pieces that have a burr. Another method of resolving this hazard is to automate the loading/unloading process. However, this is difficult and expensive to accomplish in a job shop environment, so it is not viable in a lot of cases. Even then there are hazards associated with the burred parts even after they are successfully unloaded from the machine since they must again be handled to deburr them, or at the least to prepare them for shipment. We must keep these hazards in mind and protect our employees during these processes.

There was an article in the April edition of the *Industrial Safety & Hygiene News* that I cannot get out of my mind. It is titled “Good Old Mom” and written by Dan Markiewicz. It discusses the U.S. mothers in the workplace, and the inadequacies of health measures specifically aimed at this group of employees. I would highly recommend that you read this article because it offers insights that I had not considered before, and that I believe are worthy of your consideration.

I hope to run into you at GEAR EXPO! 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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