
Food Processing Toolbox Talk: Safe Use of Industrial Peeling Machines

Description

Welcome to our Toolbox Talk. Today, we delve into the critical topic of safety in the use of industrial peeling machines within the fruit and vegetable processing sector. These machines are integral to our operations, but they also present potential hazards, including cuts and abrasions, which we must address.

Understanding the Equipment

Industrial peelers comprise several components, each with its unique function and associated risks:

- Peeling Chamber:** This is the heart of the machine where the fruits or vegetables undergo peeling. The chamber's interior is lined with abrasive material, which, if not handled correctly, can cause injuries. Always ensure the chamber is empty before reaching in and avoid direct contact with the abrasive lining.
- Water Spraying System:** This system sprays water onto the produce during the peeling process, washing away the peeled skin. It's crucial to ensure the water pressure is set correctly to prevent forceful splashes that could lead to slips or falls.
- Rotating Disc:** This disc rotates the produce to ensure all sides are evenly peeled. Be aware of this moving part to avoid entanglement injuries. Never attempt to adjust the produce while the disc is in motion.
- Pressure Control System:** This system maintains the optimal pressure inside the peeling chamber for efficient peeling. Incorrect pressure settings can lead to equipment malfunction or suboptimal peeling results. Only trained personnel should adjust these settings.
- Waste Disposal System:** This system collects and disposes of waste, including peeled skin. Regular cleaning is essential to prevent blockages and maintain hygiene standards. Always turn off the machine before cleaning this component.
- Safety Guard:** This protective shield safeguards the operator from potential cuts and abrasions. Always check that it is secure before operating the machine. Never operate the machine without the safety guard in place.
- Control Panel:** This includes the operation controls, such as start/stop buttons, speed control, and emergency stop. Familiarise yourself with all functions and ensure you can quickly access the emergency stop in case of a malfunction.

Key Actions for Safety

To ensure safety while using the peeling machine, consider the following actions:

- Always wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including cut-resistant gloves and safety glasses.
- Check the safety guard is secure before each use.

3. Regularly clean the waste disposal system to prevent blockages.
4. Familiarise yourself with the control panel, especially the emergency stop.
5. Report any malfunctions or damage to the machine immediately.

Factual Statistics

- According to the HSE, in 2020/21 there were 1.7 million work-related illnesses in the UK.
- The food and drink manufacturing sector reported a rate of 610 per 100,000 workers for non-fatal injuries. This rate is significantly higher than the national average for non-fatal workplace injuries.

The Law

In the UK, the following regulations apply to the use of peeling machines:

- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:** Employers must ensure the health and safety of all employees.
- **Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER):** Equipment must be suitable for use, maintained, and used only by trained personnel.

Why it Matters

Ignoring safety protocols can lead to serious injuries and legal repercussions. It's crucial we all understand and follow the correct procedures when using industrial peeling machines.

Engagement

Let's reinforce what we've learned:

1. **Question:** What is the purpose of the safety guard on the peeling machine?
2. **Activity:** In pairs, inspect a peeling machine and identify its key components.

Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility. Let's look out for each other and ensure a safe working environment.

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