

2004:B20

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Kevin Kobus
Assistant Deputy Minister
Business and Finance Division

DATE: December 2, 2004

SUBJECT: Advisory: Potential Hazard regarding Woodworking and
Similar Machines without Low-Voltage Protection

It has been brought to the attention of the Ministry of Education by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) that there is a potential electrical safety hazard for students and staff in schools in Ontario.

Specifically, the Ontario *Electrical Safety Code* Rule 28-400 requires low-voltage protection on equipment where automatic re-starting, after a power outage, is liable to create a hazard. Low-voltage protection can be provided either on a single piece of equipment or for a group of several machines.

Electrical equipment such as saws, lathes, planers and milling machines (commonly referred to as bench tools) intended for use in domestic or similar environments are being used in schools. The specifications for the manufacture and rules for approval of the use of these bench tools, intended for domestic use, do not require low-voltage protection. Effectively this means that if a power tool is being operated and power is interrupted, it will come back on automatically when power is restored. In domestic use situations this does not create a significant hazard.

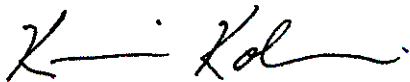
In a school setting, however, the automatic restarting of equipment can create a significant hazard. If, for example, a saw is being used and there is a power outage, when power is restored a board that was being cut could kick back and result in serious injury to anyone standing close to the saw. Similarly, a student could be adjusting a piece of equipment during a power outage and have his or her hands in the equipment when power is restored. The equipment could seriously injure the student.

Therefore, school boards are urged to contact a professional electrical engineer or licensed electrical contractor for advice on installations that meet the requirement for low-voltage protection.

Any work undertaken by your board in the context of this advisory may be funded using your board's Pupil Accommodation Grants.

If you have any questions regarding this advisory, please contact Ted Olechna, Provincial Code Engineer, Electrical Safety Authority, at 905-712-5366 or by fax at 905-507-4572 (e-mail: ted.olechna@ElectricalSafety.on.ca).

If you have any questions for the Ministry of Education, please contact Steven Mitchell at 416-325-2015 (e-mail: steven.mitchell@edu.gov.on.ca).



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cc: Senior Business Officials
Senior Plant Officials