

Protecting Little Fingers

Finger injuries caused by door entrapments can be quite severe. One study indicates that the pressure exerted at a door's hinge area when it closes can reach 40 tons per square inch. Finger entrapment injuries typically occur when a child has followed an adult to the door and the adult inadvertently closes the child's fingers in the door. Injuries range from severe bruises to finger tip amputations, and the resultant claims can be expensive.

Supervision is the most important step you can take to prevent finger entrapment injuries. Consistent reinforcement of a policy requiring staff to be aware of a child at all times, especially around doors, is a necessary component for effective supervision.

You can also install finger-pinch protection devices, such as rubber gaskets designed to fit over the opening where the door is hinged, and door-closing mechanisms that force the door to close slowly. Vendors such as Fingersafe USA, Inc. (www.fingersafe.com) and Finger Shield Safety (www.fingershieldsafety.com) carry products designed to prevent finger entrapments.

Finger entrapment injuries also occur on the playground, where children can catch their fingers in playground equipment. You can inspect your equipment by using a #2 pencil. If you can insert the pencil in a gap or hole on a piece of playground equipment, the area could be a finger entrapment zone. Have it checked and repaired by a professional, certified in playground safety. It is highly recommended that you employ a certified playground safety inspector to check your playground for hazards.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.