

# Batting/Pitching Machine safety wheel cover



This spring, we suffered a small tragedy in Arthur. A ball lodged in the chute of our batting machine and an Arthur Minor Softball player put their hand in to retrieve it, when the machine in motion. Fortunately, a few moments earlier, the machine had been turned off. Had the machine been turned on, they may have found themselves grabbed again and again by the machine.

Two fingers & a thumb were crushed. Tendons terribly stretched (not severed though). The bone across the back of the hand broke. Nerves were damaged. Surgery, pinning and a very long recovery period were required. No law suit resulted, as it was the President's (Arthur Minor Softball) child. This 'child' was 16 years old. Yes, we have policies in regards to the use of our machine.

Simply said, it was (and still is) an emotionally challenging experience. And, she couldn't play softball this summer. Much discomfort, then and to this day, resulted. Many anxious moments resulted wondering about the long term viability of the fingers/thumb. Fortunately no amputations of the fingers/thumb resulted. Physio-therapy is still a regular on our agenda. I would gladly pay hundreds of dollars not to go through this experience.



I believe that there are probably many more organizations that could have this terrible experience. In a round-about-way, we have known for a long time that one could be hurt. However, I don't think anyone comprehended how badly one could be hurt. I would suggest that you could have your arm AMPUTATED, if the machine was actually running. Every time you try to remove yourself from the running machine, you could be pulled back through. How many machines out there do not have safety covers over the spinning wheels? From what I have observed, most of them. If you EVER have a ball stick in the machine, you are highly prone to having this accident happen in your community.



After the accident, we approached a gentleman who specializes in safety covers, to build a safety cover for our machine. We are now back up and running, and feeling safe for all of our users. The new design has a chute feeding the balls, which if you reached in, would not allow you to get to touch the wheels. If a ball got stuck, we would have to take a few minutes to take the safety cover off the machine.

Your organization could get a safety cover for your machine. Probable cost is \$750 to \$1000, as each project is unique. To begin this process email: [jbenham@bsginc.ca](mailto:jbenham@bsginc.ca) or call Jeff Benham at 519-571-2076.