



Q: Can I guard an estop button to prevent employees from hitting it accidentally?

A: I understand why some employers want to guard an estop to prevent it from repeatedly getting activated when there is no emergency. However, any kind of guarding is prohibited on an estop. The ANSI B11.19-2010 12.9.2.1f states that “the emergency stop device shall remain unguarded”. In the explanatory information it goes further in stating at no time may anything cover an unactuated (armed) pushbutton. Also, it states that a push button shall be installed such that it is unobstructed and can be actuated by the palm of the hand.

A few other tips, be sure emergency stops are inspected at least once a year and are red with a yellow background. Finally keep in mind, emergency stop devices are not safe guarding devices, they are complementary to guards and other safeguarding methods and cannot be the single source of protection on a machine.