

HAND SAFETY AND GLOVE USE

TOOLBOX TALK 2 - SERIES 1



INTRODUCTION

It's easy to take hands and fingers for granted - employers and employees do it everyday! Yet these extremities are regularly subject to injury on site. Most people don't recognize how essential hands are until a serious injury occurs affecting use.

Remember these important facts:

- Your hands make you a skilled and valuable worker!
- Your hands are an incredibly complex and a delicate part of your body.
- Hands and fingers are difficult, if not impossible, to replace.

Following these safety guidelines will help prevent the unnecessary injury or loss of these invaluable assets.

BEST WORK PRACTICES

- ❑ Come to work well rested.
- ❑ Stay alert and pay attention to the task at hand.
- ❑ Understand existing job site hazards and control or eliminate exposure.
- ❑ Select the right hand or power tool for the job.
- ❑ Understand all operating instructions for required tools or machines.
- ❑ Inspect hand and power tools for electrical hazards and safety guards.
- ❑ DO NOT put hands into a danger (cutting) zone; use a push stick.
- ❑ When using a knife, cut AWAY from the body.
- ❑ Ensure energy is controlled – locked and/or tagged out for repairs.
- ❑ Follow best industry safe practices and safe work procedures using PPE.



- ❑ Rely on experience, training, good judgment and common sense to protect hands, eyes, face, and other extremities.
- ❑ Use gloves that “fit snug” to the hand.
- ❑ Use caution when working around machinery and rotating parts (i.e. belts, pulleys, chains and sprockets).

HAZARDS

- ❑ **Laceration injury to the finger is the leading occupational injury treated in U.S. emergency departments.**¹ Don't underestimate the benefits of proper glove use and training for high-risk tasks!
- ❑ **Failing to wear gloves is giving up a big advantage in hand safety.** Risk of hand injury is ever present with a variety of machinery and in various work settings. However, proper hand safety and glove use goes a long way in avoiding these crises. In two controlled studies, glove use was shown to reduce the risk of an acute occupational hand injury by about 60%. Additionally, in two larger studies of acute hand injury at work, 72% and 81% of injured workers reported not wearing gloves at the time of the injury.
- ❑ **Wearing gloves alone will not keep your hands safe.** The hard fact is that the nature of construction work is often tragically interrupted as a result of laceration, crushing, and amputation injuries. Glove use appears to lower the risk of low energy transfer injuries the likes of lacerations and punctures. However, glove use is NOT associated with a lower risk of sustaining injuries in which the energy transferred to the hands exceeds the physical properties of the glove (e.g. crush, fracture, or dislocating injuries).² This is why following all of the best work practices is key to keeping hands safe.

CONCLUSION

Hands are clearly the body part with the highest degree of exposure day-to-day. It is important to raise awareness and talk about preventing hand injuries regardless of how major or minor the hand injury may be. Most workers are willing to wear gloves when the dangers of not wearing them exist. Workers wearing gloves usually don't worry about cutting their hands and grip materials better and production will increase. Select the glove technology that provides the best defense, safely protecting the use of hands while engaged in construction activities.

Footnotes 1, 2: Sorock, G.S., D.A. Lombardi, R. Hauser, E. Eisen, R. Herrick, and M.A. Mittleman: A case-crossover study of transient risk factors for occupational acute hand injury. *Occup. Environ. Med.* (March, 2004).

JOB SITE: _____ **INSTRUCTOR:** _____ **DATE:** _____

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Hanson Safety Services, LLC
439 Third Baxter Street
Fort Mill, SC 29708-6425
Office/Fax: 803.548.1567
Cell: 803.315.2666
jeff@hansonsafety.com
www.hansonsafety.com

