



# Weekly Safety Meeting

*Your Safety Is Our Business®*

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## Protect Your Hands

Hand injuries account for 80 percent of all occupational injuries. This is because the hands are engaged in almost all activities on the job. Can you imagine any occupation that does not make use of the hand? Hands are so important because of their utility. They provide us with the dexterity needed to perform most daily activities. In fact, hands, as tools, are so versatile and can perform many more intricate functions than any single known tool.

Protecting your fingers and hands is important for your work and quality of life. Work-related hand injuries are one of the leading reasons workers end up in the emergency room and miss work. Damage to the nerves in your fingers and hands, loss of a finger, a skin burn or allergic reaction, can negatively impact the quality of your work, your productivity – or worse – end your career and seriously detract from your quality of life. The cost of these types of injuries and illnesses to the construction industry is estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

There are many dangerous conditions on the job to which the hand is constantly exposed. Sharp edges, pinch points, protruding objects, splinters, exposed blades on unguarded machinery, and many more. These conditions may not always be obvious to the worker.

### Causes of hand injuries:

- **Punctures, cuts or lacerations** – caused by contact with sharp, spiked, or jagged edges on equipment, tools, or materials;
- **Crushing injuries, fractures or amputations** – caused by contact with gears, belts, wheels and rollers, falling objects, and rings, gloves or clothing getting caught, and putting your hand in harm's way;
- **Strains, sprains, and other musculoskeletal injuries** – caused by using the wrong tool for the job, or one that is too big, small, or heavy for your hand;
- **Burns** – caused by direct contact with a hot surface or a chemical; and
- **Dermatitis and other skin disorders** – caused by direct contact with chemicals in products and materials.

### Preventive Measures

Follow the work practices and use the equipment and gloves provided by your employer. Gloves and safety procedures won't work if they're not used or followed. Be aware of the job tasks, equipment, and materials that can create a risk for a hand injury or put your skin in contact with a chemical, and know the steps that should be taken to prevent exposures and injuries.

- Always stay alert and focused on keeping your hands safe – not just at the start of work or a task.
- Keep guards on machinery and power tools in place – Don't remove or reposition them.



- Don't put your hands or fingers near the moving parts of a power tool or equipment. Make sure machinery, equipment, and power tools are completely off before you try replacing, cleaning or repairing parts – follow lock-out/tag-out procedures.
- Identify safety features on tools and equipment, such as emergency off switches, before you use them.
- Check tools and equipment to make sure they are in proper working order before beginning a task.
- Keep hands and fingers away from sharp edges (blades, protruding nails, etc.). Never cut toward the palm of your hand.
- Wear gloves that fit your hand and are right for the work being performed – not all gloves protect against all hazards.
- Do not wear rings, other jewelry, or loose articles of clothing that could get caught on a moving object.

**Safety fits like a glove; Try one on!**





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