



# Weekly Safety Meeting

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## Preventing Cuts and Lacerations

Each year, millions of workers suffer workplace injuries that could have been prevented. Some of the most common and preventable injuries are cuts and lacerations. Although statistical data differs from study to study, cuts and lacerations often rank as the second or third most frequent workplace injury.

Approximately 30 percent of all workplace injuries involve cuts or lacerations and about 70 percent of those injuries are to the hands or fingers

Not only do cuts hurt, but they can sideline employees for days, weeks—sometimes even permanently. Just about every job requires a worker to have healthy hands. Cuts are also more costly than most employers realize.

The good news is that lacerations are largely preventable. Proper training and PPE are important but, cutting to the heart of the problem, so is choosing tools that are as safe as possible.

### Common Cut/Laceration Injuries:

- Scratches and abrasions;
- Minor cuts requiring first aid;
- Needle sticks;
- Puncture wounds;
- Deep lacerations requiring medical attention, sutures;
- Lacerations involving nerve and/or tendon damage; and
- Amputations.

### Causes of Cuts and Lacerations:

- Improper training;
- Lack of established safety procedures;
- Employees in a hurry, taking short cuts, or not following safety procedures;
- Failure to wear cut-resistant gloves or wearing improper gloves for the job;
- Contact with metal items such as nails, metal stock, or burrs;
- Hand tools with blades (e.g., knives, box cutters, screwdrivers, chisels);
- Powered machinery with cutting blades, pinch points, chain and sprocket, conveyor belts, rotating parts, motors, presses, lathes;
- Handling sharp objects or material such as glass, sheet metal;
- Improper tool for the job or tool used improperly (e.g., using a screwdriver as a pry bar);

- Tools in poor condition (e.g., cracked or broken handle, dull blade, mushroomed head or slippery from exposure to oil-based chemicals);
- Missing or improperly adjusted guarding;
- Poor housekeeping, clutter, debris; and
- Poor lighting, reduced visibility.

### **Prevention Strategies:**

The key to preventing these injuries is keeping body parts away from hazards. Employers should establish work procedures to identify and control exposure to hazards.

The suggested control methods to minimize the risk of cuts and lacerations are:

- Training employees to use established safety procedures;
- Maintaining proper machine guarding;
- Using lockout/tagout procedures;
- Wearing personal protective equipment;
- Safe tool use; and
- Good housekeeping.

### **Summary:**

With thorough analysis and planning, you can develop a prevention plan to help eliminate these types of injuries from your workplace. Thankfully, the number of cuts and lacerations reported decreases each year.

***SAFETY...IT'S IN YOUR HANDS!!***

