Hand Protection – Handle with Care Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

Next to our eyes, our hands are probably the most important part of our body when it comes to doing our work. Yet many of the things we do with our hands are done without any. They’ll go anyplace they’re sent and they only act as wisely as the person they belong to; so before you use your hands think of their safekeeping.

What’s the Danger

COMMON TYPES OF HAND INJURIES:

1. Traumatic injuries often occur from careless use of machinery or tools. Hands and fingers get caught, pinched or crushed in chains, wheels, rollers, or gears. They are punctured, torn or cut by spiked or jagged tools and edges that shear or chop.
2. Contact injuries result from contact with solvents, acids, cleaning solutions, and flammable liquids and other substances that can cause burns or injure tissue.
3. Repetitive motion injuries happen when tasks require repeated, rapid hand movements for long periods of time.

HAND INJURY HAZARDS

- Punctures, cuts or lacerations caused by contact with sharp, spiked or jagged edges on equipment, tools or materials.
- Crushed, fractures or amputations caused by contact with hammers, manhole lids, gears, belts, wheels and rollers, falling objects.
- 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.
- Rashes and other skin disorders caused by direct contact with chemicals in products and materials.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Prevention of Hand Injuries

There is not a single glove that will protect from all hazards. Selection of gloves must be based on the hazards that are present, the job task, work conditions, and the duration of use. Don’t use gloves that are torn or damaged. Inspect gloves prior to each use.

Choose gloves designed to protect against specific hazards of a job being performed. Types range from common canvas work gloves to highly specialized gloves used in specific industries. Rubber, vinyl or neoprene gloves are used when handling fuels, lubricants, acids, cleansers, and concrete. Leather gloves or leather reinforced with metal stitching useful for handling rough or abrasive materials. Flexible knit rubber palm gloves for grip, comfort, and general use.

- 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.
- 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 before you use them, such as emergency off switches.
- Keep hands and fingers away from sharp edges (blades,

protruding nails, etc.). Never cut toward yourself.
- Select hand tools that are ergonomic for your hand the right size, low weight, and as grip.
- Wear gloves that fit your hand and are right for the work being performed.
- Do not wear rings, other jewelry or loose articles of clothing that could get caught on a moving object.

GENERIC HAND PREVENTION

There are several practices employers and employees can implement to reduce the risk of hand injury: engineering controls, administrative controls and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Engineering controls reduce hazards through the use of equipment that has built-in measures to protect the worker, and is always the preferred way to reduce workplace hazards. Some common types of engineering controls include safety guards, electrical proximity limiting devices, emergency stop devices, and ergonomic tools.

Administrative controls are procedures management puts in place, and are useful when engineering controls either cannot be implemented or cannot alone effectively reduce risk. Workplace safety training, lock and tag rules, warning signs, product substitution, and attention to ergonomic principles are all forms of administrative controls.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn to minimize hazards when engineering and administrative controls are not feasible or sufficient. The PPE worn to protect hands are gloves.

BEST HAND PREVENTION INJURY PRACTICES OVERVIEW

- Perform risk assessment.
- Follow user manual and product labels.
- Use appropriate gloves (type, size and shape) and PPEs or barrier cream.
- Avoid using finger rings and ornaments such as bracelets or watches.
- Change grips, hand positions or motions. Give hands a rest.

- Use machine guards and safety devices etc at all the times.
- Lockout and switch off equipment and machines those are not in use.
- Wash hands when in contact with corrosive chemicals or as appropriate.
- Think through each job before you begin.
- Follow safety rules.
- Avoid shortcuts.
- If an accident happens, seek prompt treatment.
- Report injuries to your supervisor.

FINAL WORD

Hand injuries are both expensive and tragic. A hand injury can cost anywhere from $540 to $26,000, according to the National Safety Council. Injuries to the hand are the second most common type of workplace injury, so they also have a big impact on workers’ compensation claims.