

Toolbox Safety Topic

Hand Injuries

Like anything else we use constantly, we tend to take our hands for granted – that is, until we injure a hand or finger. Suddenly the simplest tasks, like buttoning a shirt, signing your name, or twisting open a jar lid becomes difficult, if not impossible.

More than a half million disabling hand and finger injuries happen on the job every year, and there are many ways you can be affected.

Amputations – the cutting off of all or part of the hand. This is the most serious type of hand injury.

Lacerations – cuts that can be major when nerves or tendons are severed.

Burns – from contact with heat, chemicals, or electricity.

Fractures – when a hand breaks a fall, gets crushed under a heavy object, or gets trapped or twisted.

Dermatitis – itching, swelling rashes or allergies from chemical contact or latex gloves.

Punctures – from splinters to a stab wound from a spiked tool can pierce through skin to tendons, ligaments, and muscle tissue. Infections are a common problem with punctures.

Preventing hand injuries:

Don't stick hands or fingers into anything before looking! That includes machines, desk drawers, toolboxes, dark areas, holes, etc. You just never know what's inside!

Don't remove machine guards! They're there to protect you from mechanical hazards.

Don't wear gloves, rings, watches, bracelets, or loose long sleeves when you work with machinery. Long hair should be tied back.

Don't use your hands to push materials into saws and other machinery – use a push stick.

Don't use your hands to sweep up metal or glass chips – use a brush.

Don't put your hands or fingers in a situation which could present a pinch point.

Be careful around electricity. Only 10 milliamps can contract your muscles so you can't "let go".

Wear leather work gloves when handling materials such as lumber, angle iron, etc.

Always wash hands before eating to avoid ingesting lead, chemicals, and other harmful residues.

Make sure you use the right glove for the hazard. Don't assume leather gloves will protect you from chemical exposure, or that chemical resistant gloves are puncture resistant. If you have identified more than one hazard, make sure the glove will protect you against both (or you may have to wear one type of glove over another type of glove).

Any questions?

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Date: _____

Meeting Conducted By: _____ Title: _____

Attendees

#	NAME	#	NAME
1		24	
2		25	
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