



Casualty Risk Engineering Services Hand Protection Basics



Some tasks endanger your workers' hands to danger. These hazards may include:

- Sharp objects or equipment parts (glass, edges of metal parts in process; knives, shears).
- Abrasive objects or equipment parts (goods in process; sanders).
- Pointed objects that can penetrate skin (awls, icepicks, drill bits).
- Hot objects or cold objects (frozen food, welding equipment).
- Chemicals that can be absorbed by skin & irritate it (solvents, dish soap, detergents).
- Corrosive/caustic chemicals (battery acid, drain cleaner, solvents).
- Infectious agents (human or animal blood, body fluids, or wastes).
- Vibrating or impact tools that subject hands to stress.
- Electrical shock.

Safety equipment companies can supply protective gloves. Prior to purchasing, you should strive to eliminate or minimize hazards. Actions you can take include:

- Install machine guards to prevent employees from contacting a hazard.
- Pack hot or cold items in insulated containers.
- Obtain vibrating or impact tools that absorb energy instead of transmitting it to hands.
- Use milder soaps, detergents, & solvents.
- Develop, implement, & enforce safety rules (e.g. keeping fingers away from moving parts).
- Require workers to wash hands after handling chemicals.

When selecting protective gloves, you should:

- Identify hazards to your workers' hands, remembering their hands may be exposed to more than 1 hazard (e.g. metal workers holding sharp parts & cutting oils; meat cutters holding cold meat & sharp knives).
- Select gloves that protect against applicable hazards.
- Select gloves that fit properly & comfortably (ill-fit & discomfort lead workers to avoid wearing & may cause gloves to become caught in danger areas; reduced dexterity may lead to dropping heavy or sharp objects on feet or other body parts).

After you have selected gloves, you should:

- Inform workers about the hazards to their hands & their need to wear gloves.
- Inform workers about the possible need to use different glove types for different hazards (e.g. insulated glove to carry meat from freezer, metal mesh glove to protect hand when cutting meat).
- Inform workers about proper use, care, & maintenance of gloves.
- Require workers to remove gloves & wash hands thoroughly to prevent contaminating coworkers.
- Inspect gloves prior to each use to ensure they are not torn, punctured, or otherwise made ineffective. Any gloves with impaired protective ability should be discarded and replaced.

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