



Introduction

Daily tasks put your hands in direct contact with tools and equipment that can cause serious injury. Proper training is the key in preventing hand injuries from occurring.

Each year, more than \$700M goes towards hand and wrist injuries. Almost 200,000 hand injuries lead to lost work time. Up to 70% of these injuries result from a lack of hand protection. This means a majority of that money is spent on treating and settling workplace injuries that are easily avoidable through proper use of protective equipment. [1](#)

Before starting any task, ask yourself, “Do I know how to properly and safely operate this piece of equipment?” If the answer is no, reach out to a supervisor for help. Great safety involves safe working habits and common sense. Using the right tools and wearing protective equipment can help prevent injuries every day.

This week we will discuss all things related to hand safety protection, including: preventing cuts and burns, best practices for hammers and tools, tips for tool selection, and the do’s and don’ts of hand safety.

Monday – Preventing Cuts and Burns

Recognizing and identifying potential hazards that can occur during a task are necessary in preventing hand lacerations, burns and structural injuries.

Cut Prevention

- Focus - Pay attention and always concentrate on the task at hand.
- Don’t Feel the Steel - When cutting an object, curl your fingertips and thumb under the top knuckle while firmly holding the object. Remember to cut away from your body and to wear the appropriate cutting glove.
- Use the Right Tool - When opening boxes, always use the proper box cutters. Do NOT use a knife as a box cutter!
- Watch Your Reactions - NEVER reach for falling sharp objects such as knives, box cutters, or any sharp tools.
- Maintain Tools - Never use a broken safety knife! If it is broken, it is no longer a safety knife. Fix or replace it immediately.
- Common Sense – Think before reaching for something. Make sure you can see the entire object before grabbing it. There are always hidden dangers!



Burn Prevention

- Focus - Pay attention and always concentrate on the task at hand.
- PPE - When handling hot objects, always wear approved heat resistant gloves. You may need to use large gloves that cover your forearms as well.
- Use the Best Glove for the Job – Don’t use gloves that you think are “good enough.” Don’t settle for better. Use the best glove for the job, because you might not get a second chance with chemical reactions. Chemicals can cause severe third degree burns when mixed or used incorrectly. Ensure you are wearing the BEST gloves that are made to protect against hazardous chemicals.



Tuesday – Hand and Cutting Tools Best Practices

In addition to prevention tips and protective equipment, you play an active role in your work safety. When a task requires a tool or piece of equipment to complete, are you using it properly? Do you use tools for tasks outside of their intended purpose? There are safe and dangerous ways of using tools so it is important to determine how you are working.



General Best Practices for Hand Tools

- Correct - Use the right tool for the job.
- Check - Inspect tools before using them.
- Change - Replace or recondition tools when they are in dangerous or unsafe conditions.
- Clean - Always keep tools clean.
- Clamp - When working on an object, instead of holding it open with your hands, use a clamp if possible.

General Best Practices for Cutting Tools

- Keep cutting tools sharp. Dull tools can lead to slippage and unintentional injury.
- Replace or recondition tools with “mushroomed” heads.
- When using the tool, handle it in such a way that if slipping occurs, the force is directed away from the body.
- When using a knife, wear a cut resistant glove on the opposite hand to the one holding the knife.
- Always retract or close the blade of the knife when you are finished with it.
- Do NOT store knives with other tools. Store them separately or in a protective case.

Wednesday – Hand and Cutting Tools Best Practices (Continued)

General Best Practice for Torsion Tools

- Do NOT push wrenches, only pull. If pushing is necessary, do so with an open palm. Do not wrap your hands around the wrench.
- Use a short steady pull rather than quick and jerky motions.
- Use either a box or socket wrench instead of an adjustable or open-ended wrench. These wrenches are less likely to damage or slip off the bolt.
- If you use an adjustable wrench, apply force to the fixed jaw.
- When using pipe wrenches, make sure that the pipe is clean and free from oil and grease and that the wrench jaws are sharp and clean.
- Do NOT use pliers in place of a wrench.
- Do NOT use a screwdriver as a pry bar, punch, or wedge. The tip should be flat and tapered for a snug fit.
- Do NOT use a hammer on an open ended wrench.



Best Practices for Hammers

- Use the proper hammer for the job.
- Ensure the handle is securely fitted to the hammerhead.
- Keep the handle smooth and free from oil and grease to prevent slippage.
- Always wear safety glasses or goggles to protect from metal, flying nails, wood chips, or plastic fragments.





Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 41: October 7 – October 11, 2019

Hand Safety

Thursday – Selecting the Right Tool

Whether at work or at home, the rules for hand tools remain the same. These principles provide very important reminders when working with your hands:

- **Never become complacent!**
- **Always keep your eyes and mind on the task!**
- **Keep your hands and fingers out of the Line-of-Fire!**

Make sure and take the time to think about the requirements of the job before picking up a tool and working. For optimum safety, always use the correct tool. Before selecting a tool, evaluate your work space to determine which tool will work efficiently and safely for the task at hand.

Training Exercise:

Untie your shoelace. Now, with only one hand, try to retie that shoelace. (Pause for a few minutes) This is possible, but it's not easy.

Imagine you lost your hand in a job accident. This would become a reality. As stated earlier, almost 200,000 hand related injuries lead to lost work time. That's more than 575 a day! NOW imagine if you lost a hand in a job accident, this is what it would be like every day, working with one hand. Hand injuries are easily preventable through safe working and protective equipment. There is no reason that number is so high!

Friday – Dos and Don'ts of Hand Safety

Your daily work brings you in contact with items that can injure your hands, but you can take precautions to prevent these injuries from happening.

Do:

- Pay attention to where both hands are placed at all times while working, especially when working with machinery.
- Use the right process or tool for the job. Ensure you know how to use safely use whatever process or tools you choose to operate.
- Wear appropriate gloves to protect against particular hazards.
- Only use tools for their intended purposes.
- Stretch your hands and fingers from time to time to give tense and tired muscles and tendons a chance to relax.
- When opening boxes, ALWAYS use the proper self-retracting box cutters – never use a knife as a box cutter!

Don't:

- Don't use hands to feed material into machines. Use a push block or guide.
- Don't wear gloves, jewelry, or long sleeves around rotating machinery.
- Don't use your hands to sweep up glass, wood chips, metal shavings, or other sharp objects.
- Don't use strong solvents, chemicals, or gasoline to clean your hands.
- Don't reach for something if you can't see the entire object. There are always hidden dangers!
- Don't place hands or wrists in awkward positions for extended periods of time.

Discussion:

Have you ever sustained a hand injury on the job? At home? What happened? What was the outcome?

Sources:

[1]: <https://blog.ringersgloves.com/hand-injury-statistics>