



Hand Protection Basics

- **Some tasks expose 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

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

Arrange equipment to keep hands from danger areas (*e.g. automation to place stock*)

Provide tongs to place stock in danger areas (*e.g. near blades or punches*)

Install guards that keep fingers out of danger area but allow stock to be placed

Install two-handed "start" control buttons which must be pressed simultaneously in order to force workers to keep hands out of danger areas

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 co-workers