

## :: Hand Protection ::

Human hands are unique. No other creature in the world has hands that can grasp, hold, move and manipulate objects like human hands. They are one of your greatest assets. And, as such, must be protected and cared for.

Take a moment to hold your hands out in front of you. Look at them. They are the only two hands you will ever have.

It has been estimated that almost 20 percent of all disabling accidents on the job involve the hands. Without your fingers or hands, your ability to work would be greatly reduced.

You can suffer a traumatic injury to your hands in many ways.

- Tools and machines with sharp edges can cut your hands.
- Staples, screwdrivers, nails, chisels and stiff wire can puncture your hands.
- Getting your hands caught in machinery can sprain, crush or remove your hands and fingers.
- Coming into contact with caustic or toxic chemicals, biological substances, electrical sources or extremely cold or hot objects can irritate or burn your hands.
- Whenever you repeat the same hand movement over a long period of time, you run the risk of repetitive motion problems. Repetitive motion problems often appear as numbness or tingling sensation accompanied by pain and the loss of gripping power in your hands.

### Preventive Measures:

Machine guards and safety mechanisms are designed to protect your hands and fingers.

- **WARNING:** Never remove machine guards or bypass safety mechanisms. Check with your organization's lock-out/tag-out procedures before attempting to put your hands into machinery.

Poorly-maintained machinery, tools, sloppy work areas and cluttered aisles all contribute to hand injuries.

- Good hygiene includes hand washing. Hand washing helps to remove germs and dirt from your hands. Clean

hands are less susceptible to infection and other skin problems, such as contact dermatitis.

Gloves are one of the best ways to protect your hands against injuries.

### There are many types of gloves that are designed to protect your hands:

- Metal-mesh gloves resist sharp edges and prevent cuts.
- Leather gloves shield your hands from rough surfaces.
- Vinyl and neoprene gloves protect your hands against toxic chemicals.
- Rubber gloves protect you when working around electricity.

Learn the correct type/style of glove for the job you are doing:

- Padded, cloth gloves protect your hands from sharp edges, slivers, dirt and vibration.
- Heat-resistant gloves protect your hands from heat and flames.
- Latex, disposable gloves are used to protect your hands from germs and bacteria.
- Lead-lined gloves are used to protect your hands from radiation sources.

### When selecting a pair of protective gloves:

- Pick gloves that fit.
- Some gloves may be chemical-specific and have a life expectancy. Discard them after the recommended time has expired.
- Remove any rings, watches or bracelets that might cut or tear your gloves.
- Wash your hands before and after wearing your gloves.

## :: Hand Protection Cont. ::

- Inspect your gloves before you use them. Look for holes and cracks that might leak.
  - Replace gloves that are worn or torn.
  - After working with chemicals, hold your gloved hands under running water to rinse away any chemicals or dirt before removing the gloves.
  - Wash cotton gloves as needed.
  - Avoid borrowing gloves. Gloves are personal protective equipment.
  - Store gloves right-side-out in a clean, cool, dry, ventilated area.
  - Never wear gloves around powered, rotating equipment - drills, lathes, etc.
- Never use gloves that are ripped, torn, or otherwise damaged – replace them with the correct type of glove immediately!
- Think before you work – protect your hands; you only have two of them!