

Hand Safety

Introduction:

Work-related hand injuries are among the main reasons workers end up in the emergency room. According to OSHA, one million workers are treated in the ER for hand injuries annually. 70% of the workers who experienced a hand injury were not wearing gloves, and another 30% were wearing gloves, but the gloves were not appropriate for the task being performed, or they were damaged. Injuries to the nerves in your hands or fingers, the loss of a finger, or multiple fingers, or even worse, your entire hand, can have a detrimental impact on your career, quality of life, and family. The cost on the industry for these types of injuries is in the hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Discussion Points:

- Work-related hand injuries, OSHA statistics, and cost to industry
- Be aware of where you place your hands
- Be able to recognize hazards associated with tools and equipment
- Inspect all tools, equipment, and gloves before use
- Life changing injuries

Discussion:

How many times have you come close to getting your hand or fingers caught in some machinery or crushed because you placed your hand someplace it shouldn't have been?

Most injuries can be prevented. To avoid injuries to fingers and hands, it is vital to follow company policies when using all tools and equipment. Workers should be able to recognize hazards associated with tools and equipment being used. Be aware of pinch-points and rotating and moving parts, exposed blades, sharp edges, and protruding objects. Work gloves should be provided by your employer and they should ensure the gloves are appropriate for the task being performed. Employees should inspect all tools, equipment, and gloves before beginning a task, and remove all rings and wristwatches.

The most common causes of injury when performing a job-related task are improper training, disregard for safety procedures, lack of self-awareness, and distractions. Report all injuries to your supervisor; even the smallest scratch can become infected and result in a serious health issue. Remember, it only takes a few seconds for something to go wrong. Take a moment and think what it would be like if you were to experience a serious injury to your fingers or hand. Simple routine tasks such as tying your shoes, picking up a spoon, or petting your dog would be changed forever.

As always, stay safe out there!

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