



HAND PROTECTION

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The California Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) requires that hand protection be required for employees whose work involves unusual and excessive exposure of hands to cuts, burns, harmful physical or chemical agents or radioactive materials which are encountered and capable of causing injury or impairments. In order to provide appropriate protection, gloves should be chosen based on the hazards the employee will be exposed to. The following are guidelines that can assist in glove selection:

- **Cloth or canvas gloves** are most effective in protecting hands against dirt, rough surfaces, wood splinters, and some temperature ranges.
- **Leather gloves** protect hands against sparks, chips, ragged and jagged edges, and moderate heat.
- **Electricians' rubber gloves** should always be worn when working on or near electrical equipment.
- **Metal mesh gloves** should be worn when working with tools having sharp blades, sheet metal or any other surface that can cut. **Never wear metal mesh gloves when working on or near electrical equipment.**
- **Aluminized gloves** provide protection against flames and extremely high temperatures.
- **Impervious gloves** (neoprene, nitrile, latex, vinyl, PVC, etc.) should be worn when handling chemicals and/or hazardous substances that may damage the skin. Since there are so many different types of impervious gloves available, it is important to make sure the one you choose will protect against the substances you are working with.

Hands are also susceptible to a variety of other injuries that even gloves cannot prevent. Crushing blows to the hand and accidents involving power tools are also a leading cause of serious hand injuries. Here are some precautions that could prevent serious hand accidents from occurring:

- Never use hands to perform a task that can be performed by a tool. For example, use a brush or a rag to wipe away debris---not your hands.
- Never wear rings, bracelets or other hand jewelry when working with power tools with moving parts.
- Keep machine guards in place and in good working order.
- Always be aware of pinch and nip points (i.e., gears, pulleys, hinges) of each job. Avoid placing hands and fingers near these points.
- Treat all minor injuries such as cuts and abrasions immediately.
- Never ignore the first signs of dermatitis or other skin disorders.