



Army *Safety* Gram



Your Hands - Handle With Care

Our hands are on the front line of action at work, and so they are easily injured. A hand injury is serious because it can result in a permanent disability, a life threatening infection or loss of ability to do certain types of work.

It is important to follow safe work practices to prevent hand injuries. It is also important to wear gloves to protect the hands in many circumstances - and it can be just as important not to wear gloves in other situations.



Follow These Guidelines for Protecting Your Hands:

- ◆ Keep hands in a safe position while working. Keep them clear of moving machinery and other locations where they can be injured.
- ◆ Use aids such as push sticks and tongs to keep your hands away from danger zones such as rotating saw blades and hot objects.
- ◆ Stay alert. Be aware of what you and others are doing to keep your hands out of harm's way.
- ◆ Make sure that equipment is turned off and disconnected from any power source before attempting adjustments or repairs. Follow all lock-out procedures to prevent accidental start-up of equipment.
- ◆ Use machine guards and safety interlocks the way they were intended. Never remove them or bypass them. They are designed to keep you safe from injury.
- ◆ Use door knobs, drawer pulls, and vehicle door handles the way they are intended to be used. This will help to prevent the common hand injuries caused by slamming fingers in a door or drawer.
- ◆ Take off jewelry such as rings or watches when working. They can easily be caught in moving machinery and other traps.

Use Gloves which are made of the Right Material to Protect Your Hands:

- ◆ **Cold Weather.** Gloves made of leather, insulated plastic or rubber, wool or cotton are usually worn.
- ◆ **Working With Chemicals and Fluids.** Natural rubber, neoprene, and nitrile are the most common materials these protective gloves are made of. Check the chemical's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) to find out the requirements for these kinds of safety gloves. If you are unsure of what the MSDS says, ask your supervisor for help.
- ◆ **Cuts or Sharp Edges.** Reinforced heavy rubber, heavy leather gloves, Kevlar gloves or metal mesh gloves are a common choice when working with equipment that could cause serious cuts or have sharp edges. In lighter industrial settings, perhaps rubber, plastic, leather or cotton gloves may be all you need.
- ◆ **Electricity.** Rubber-insulating gloves tested for protection to a certain voltage are a good choice. Besides gloves, all other precautions should be used.
- ◆ **Heat.** Depending on how high the temperature, choices ranging from Kevlar to heat resistant leather gloves could provide the best protection.
- ◆ **Perspiration.** Cotton gloves offer the best protection if you tend to get sweaty palms while you are working.
- ◆ **Radiation.** Lead-lined rubber, plastic or leather gloves are common choices in this situation.



These are just some of examples of the types of hand protection available. Make sure that you get advice in choosing, fitting, and caring for the hand protection required for your job.

