



## HAND SAFETY

Work can be hard on the hands. Along with the wear and tear of using tools and handling heavy, sharp-edged or coarse equipment, hands are exposed to weather, chemicals, dirt, solvents, fuels, grease, cutters, etc. While your hands are one of the most used parts of the body, they are also the most mistreated. Many injuries to the hands can be prevented if you first think about what you are asking your hands to do then making sure they are protected.

### **Wear proper hand protection**

Leather gloves can protect your hands in many jobs. They can provide protection when handling rough or abrasive materials and give you better gripping power. They can also protect hands from sharp objects, thorns, and cutting tools. Some gloves are especially designed to protect the hands from solvents, petroleum products, and many agricultural chemicals. To work best, gloves should fit correctly. Overly large gloves can interfere with work or get caught in moving parts, putting your hands in danger. Hand protection can also include specific creams applied before work to guard against dermatitis causing grease, paint, chemicals, etc. A good hand lotion can soothe and moisten dry or cracked hands after a job.

### **Keep hands out of harm's way**

Recognize the hazards of the job whether working with sharp objects, cutting tools, chemicals, pinch points, or rotating equipment. Follow safety procedures, even if you have gotten away with short cuts before. Even though a job may have its own hazards, basic safety principles should always be remembered.

1. Think through each job before you do it, and then work carefully and deliberately.
2. Keep your hands away from rotating equipment and never use your hands to stop rotating parts.
3. When lifting a load, check for protrusions, nails, splinters, screws, metal banding, broken glass, etc.
4. Watch your fingers and hands when lowering heavy loads; they could get pinched.
5. Keep your hands away from loads being moved mechanically.
6. Never use your fingers to test the temperature of gases, liquids, or machinery.
7. If you do injure your hand, get prompt treatment and report it to your supervisor.
8. Your hands are like finely crafted tools of amazing strength and dexterity. They are your most valuable tools. Protect them and keep them safe.

## HAND TOOL ERGONOMICS

Hand tools are used in a wide variety of industries to accomplish both large and small tasks. Improperly using these tools can cause fatigue, strain, and other injuries. Follow the guidelines outlined below to help you avoid these types of injuries.

Your behaviors and habits can prevent ergonomic injuries when you use hand tools:

1. Keep a variety of tools handy and choose the right one for the job.
2. Grip tools firmly, but not too tightly.
3. Use tools with a reasonable amount of force, but do not strain.
4. If you can, switch hands throughout the day.
5. Rotate your tasks throughout the day.
6. Take micro-breaks every 20-30 minutes and move around.

Correct body positioning prevents ergonomic injury. Avoid awkward postures that cause you to bend, stoop, kneel, or reach repetitively or over long periods:

1. Get close to the work.
2. Ideally work at waist level.
3. Work with your arms and shoulders relaxed, not hunched.
4. Work with a straight back and neck.
5. Keep your wrists straight while you work.
6. Avoid contact stress by padding surfaces when kneeling.

Tool choices can also prevent injury. Consider the type of task when you choose a tool. Fine tasks may use smaller, lighter tools for delicate maneuvering and fitting into small work areas. Power tasks such as driving nails and cutting bulky objects may require large, heavy tools with bigger grips. Choose a tool that:

<b>Fine Tasks</b>	<b>Power Tasks</b>
Thinner handles	Thicker handles
Shorter handle	Longer handle
Pinch grip	Power grip

1. Fits comfortably in your handgrip.
2. Has the correct handle length for the job.
3. Allows you to pinch for precision or grip for power actions.

Other tool characteristics to look for:

- Spring loaded tools that snap back to position easily.
- Smooth tool handles with no ridges or edges that can cut into your knuckles or palms.
- Handles coated with a soft material.
- Handles coated with non-slip materials.
- Tools that have the correct handle angle to help you keep your wrist straight during the task.

Watch for signs and symptoms that indicate you may have a problem with your hand tools. Tell your supervisor and see your doctor if you notice:

- Pain or swelling.
- Excessive, continuing fatigue.
- Tingling or numbness.

- Decreased range of motion.
- Decreased grip strength.

Choosing tools that help you work in a good position with fewer repeated motions and less force can reduce your ergonomic risks.

**TOOLBOX TALKS**  
**Hand Safety**

Meeting Conducted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Attendees:			
Print	Signature	Print	Signature
1.		9.	
2.		10.	
3.		11.	
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