

Finding Ways To Reduce Hand Injuries?

(Before the Meeting)

Bring safety gloves provided by your department. Have a wipe board or newsprint with a colored marker on hand.

TODAY'S LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Raise employee awareness of the ways hand injuries can be prevented in their daily work tasks.

QUESTION TO EMPLOYEES: What types of hand injuries have you seen in the workplace?

(Let the employees spend about 2 minutes talking about the injuries they have seen. This gets their attention and gets them thinking about hand injury and prevention.)

ANSWER: If we look at these injuries, we would see that they fall into different types of injuries to the hand, such as cuts, crushing, punctures, burns from heat and chemicals. Our shop is no different from many others across the U.S. Each year, more than 1 million U.S. workers receive treatment in emergency departments for hand injuries. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that approximately 110,000 workers with hand and finger injuries lose days away from work annually — second only to back injuries.

The most common occupational hand injuries were:

Cuts- (from machinery, power tools, utility knives)

crush injuries- (from machinery, objects and equipment falling)

punctures- (from power tools, equipment)

fractures- (from equipment and machinery)

carpal tunnel syndrome (from equipment vibration and repetitive tasks)

burns- (from heat or chemical contact)

STATEMENT TO EMPLOYEES: Today I want to try to raise your awareness about hand injuries; why we need to prevent injuries, even the less serious ones; and I want us to come up with some ways we can lessen the risk of getting a hand injury. A recent study of hand injuries by OSHA found that the risk of hand injury was significantly increased when:

1. Equipment, tools, or work pieces did not perform as expected.
2. Workers used a different work method or performed an unusual task.
3. Workers were distracted and rushed.

QUESTION TO EMPLOYEES: What can you do to protect your hands from injury?

ANSWER:

1. machine and tool guards,
2. lockout/tagout procedures before working on power-generated machinery,
3. gloves

QUESTION TO EMPLOYEES: Name some of the tasks that you perform as part of your job that have hazards to your hands that could cause injuries. (Write the employee answers on the board)

QUESTION TO EMPLOYEES: Now, let's list the best way to protect yourself, either by machine/tool guards, lockout/tagout, or gloves.

STATEMENT TO EMPLOYEES: As you can see, we all need to be aware of the hazards we face to our hands. Machine and tool guards are there to protect your hands, don't remove them. If you have to work on a machine or tool, turn off the power source. If the machine has multiple power sources use lockout/tagout procedures, and if your task requires gloves to prevent you from getting cuts or exposure to chemicals use them. In our next safety meeting we will talk about how to choose the right glove for the job.