

## Hand injuries - Common and Preventable

According to the US Department of Labor, injuries to hands account for nearly [25% of all lost-time in the workplace](#). That's a total of 110,000 injuries per year. Yet, cuts, burns and bruises caused by a lack of protection or improper care can easily be prevented.

### ACCORDING TO THE EXPERTS

Approximately 70% of hand injuries come as a result from employees not wearing any safety gloves, while the remaining 30% occur while wearing the wrong kind of gloves. According to OSHA, these kinds of injuries are preventable through simple interventions like safety gloves and other hand Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). It's as simple as that.



A recent blog from [WeeklySafety.com](#) states the following injuries can occur when workers don't wear the proper hand protection: skin absorption of harmful substances, cuts, lacerations, abrasions, puncture wounds, nerve or tendon damage, heat stress or frostbite, and chemical or thermal burns.

In fact, according to OSHA General Industry Standard 1910.138(a), "*Employers shall select and require employees to use appropriate hand protection when employees' hands are exposed to hazards such as those from skin absorption of harmful substances; severe cuts or lacerations; severe abrasions; punctures; chemical burns; thermal burns; and harmful temperature extremes.*"

That being said, most machinists who are operating rotating machines should not wear gloves. In fact OSHA suggests machinery have guards installed or incorporated into their design that prevent hands from contacting the point of operation or other moving parts.

### THE RIGHT GLOVE

**Chemical Proof Gloves:** Any job positions that expose employees to harmful chemicals might result in a chemical reaction. Not only can chemicals burn or chap hands but can also penetrate the skin itself and enter the blood stream.

**Cut Resistant Gloves:** Often made with stainless steel Kevlar and mesh, these gloves are resistant to damage from sharp or abrasive objects such as sharp metal edges like culverts or handling materials. Specifications are measured by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) cut level.

**Thermal Proof Gloves:** Heat-resistant gloves protect against extremely hot temperatures, often fabricated from neoprene or aluminized material. Meanwhile, workplace cold-resistant gloves are different than typical gloves made for everyday use.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COUNTIES

As with all PPE use, counties should review employees' work tasks and determine what type of precautions are needed, including that for hand safety, to protect employees from injuries. Contact CTSI Loss Control for more information on PPE evaluation and usage at (303) 861-0507.