

Cuts and Lacerations

Cuts and lacerations account for most of the traumatic injuries that occur in the workplace; even though they are less severe than the average non-fatal injury or illness. Of the 3.6 million work-related injuries treated in emergency rooms across the United States each year; hands and fingers are the most commonly-treated body parts, according to the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Hazards can be reduced when equipment is maintained and used properly and when Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is provided and worn. The use of gloves for various work functions will minimize the potential for injury except when hands are near revolving machine parts – where a glove can become caught and fingers or hands can be pulled into a machine.

Machine guards, lockout/tag out procedures, removing pinch points and sharp edges from the workplace, safe work procedures and safety training programs will reduce hand injuries.

Steps to Prevent Cuts and Lacerations

- Keep hand tools (knives and scissors) sharp and in good condition
- Inspect machinery, equipment, and tools on a regular basis and before use
- Remove damaged equipment from service
- Use the appropriate equipment for the job
- Use cutting devices with a comfortable handle
- Use self-retracting blade devices
- Properly store cutting devices - Don't leave exposed blades unattended
- Don't keep exposed blades in your pocket
- Don't hold the item you are cutting in your hand, secure the item to a fixed object such as a work bench
- Never pull a cutting device towards you when cutting
- Don't try to catch a falling cutting device
- Use round tip cutting blades when possible
- Keep work area clean
- Provide and use cut resistant gloves
- Remove damaged gloves from service