

TOOLBOX TALK

Hand Safety

The human hand is among the most intricate structures of the body. Coordinated movement of tendons, bones, tissues, and nerves enables precise gripping and facilitates a broad range of complex tasks. Although frequently overlooked, the hands are consistently engaged in various activities and subjected to significant daily wear.

Without your hands it would be extremely difficult to do simple routine tasks, such as opening doors, using a fork, or tying your shoes. Your hands make you a skilled, valuable worker and hand injuries happen in a flash, but their impact can last forever.

The most common causes of hand injuries are:

- ☠ Human error. Errors can happen in different ways from forgetting to remove a piece of jewelry to accidentally getting too close to moving machinery.
- ☠ Carelessness, distractions, Frustration, Lack of awareness, boredom
- ☠ Deactivation of safety features, or bypassing them, causes needless hand and finger injuries.
- ☠ Disregard for safety procedures, not following instructions, Bending the rules. Workers make a choice to intentionally not follow safety protocols. Others think their job experience means they can bypass instructions.
- ☠ Not being aware of the non-dominant hand positioning.

Hand Safety Work Practices

- ✓ Always stay alert and focused on keeping your hands safe - not just at the start of work or a task. Giving not only attention to the hand completing the task but also the hand you are not using or using for stabilization.
- ✓ Check tools and equipment to make sure they are in proper working order before beginning a task and Identify safety features such as emergency off switches, before you use them.
- ✓ Use tools to remove your hands from the line of fire.
- ✓ Never put your hand in an area where you cannot see it.
- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings and what others are doing.
- ✓ Do not wear rings, other jewelry, or loose clothing that could get caught.
- ✓ Use well-fitting gloves suitable for specific task; not all gloves guard against every hazard.
- ✓ Never work on an energized piece of equipment. Keep guards on machinery and power tools in place - Don't remove or reposition them.

Next time you are doing a simple task at home, such as doing your hobby, getting ready in the morning, or cleaning, try doing the task with one or two less fingers. It sounds silly, but this can help put into perspective how hard it would be to complete tasks without some of our fingers.

Questions to ask your team:

What are some of the biggest hazards to our hands onsite?

What are things you can do to protect your hands?