

The theme this month is Hand Safety

BACKGROUND

Protecting your fingers and hands is important for your work and quality of life. Work-related hand injuries are one of the leading reasons workers end up in the emergency room and miss work as a result.

Causes of Hand Injuries

Ask yourself, how many times have you touched a hot surface, grabbed a sharp object, felt pain in your hand because of how you were gripping a tool or twisting your wrist, come close to getting your hand or finger caught or crushed, or had your skin come in contact with a chemical or caustic material? If you can answer yes to any of the above than that is one time too many.



Below are examples of some of the hazards that can result in hand injuries.

- Punctures, cuts, or lacerations – caused by contact with sharp, spiked, or jagged edges on equipment, tools, or materials.
- Fractures, crushed or amputations – caused by contact with belts, gears, wheels, and rollers. Falling objects, jewelry such as rings, gloves or clothing getting caught.
- Strains, sprains, and other musculoskeletal injuries caused by using the wrong tool for the job, or one that is too large, small, or heavy for your hand.
- Burns – caused by direct contact with a hot surface or a chemical.
- Skin disorders/Dermatitis – caused by direct contact with chemicals in products and materials

Preventative Measures

Follow proper work practices and use the equipment and gloves provided. **Gloves and safety procedures will not work if not used and always followed.**

- Always stay alert and focused on keeping your hands safe – not just at the start of work or a task.
- **Do Not** remove or reposition guards while equipment/tools are in operation.
- Use tools and equipment designed for the work being performed and use them as instructed by your supervisor and/or the manufacturer.
- **Do Not** put your hands or fingers near the moving parts of a power tool or equipment.
- Make sure machinery, equipment and power tools are completely off before you try replacing, cleaning or repairing parts – follow lock-out/tag-out procedures.
- Wear gloves that fit your hand and are right for the work being performed – not all gloves protect against all hazards.
- Do not wear rings, other jewelry or lose articles of clothing that could get caught on a moving object.

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Using Hand Tools

Using a tool that is damaged or in a manner that it was not designed for significantly increases the risk of injury to the individual using it.

- Ensure that you have received the correct training on how to use the tool to prevent incorrect use and injury.
 - Without training, an individual may not know how to inspect the tool to ensure it is in safe working condition.
- Only use hand tools in a manner they were designed for:
 - Using a hand tool outside of its design can cause it to break, bend or slip. This can create a sudden, unexpected movement resulting in laceration, contusion, puncture, or other injury.
- Before you use a hand tool, be sure to properly inspect it by checking:
 - Are the safety guards present?
 - Are there any signs of rust, torn, cracked, loose, or damage?
 - For electrical hand tools such as Sawzalls, the electrical cord must be inspected as well. Is the electrical cord intact with no damage to its insulation and is the ground prong present?
 - Is the handle of the tool intact? Can I handle this tool firmly and safely?
- Hand tools must be kept clean, dry, and must be stored properly
 - Is there any oil residue? Note that tools can slip from your hands easily if oily.
 - Are there adequate locations for tool storage at point of use?

Reminder - Recordable Tracking and Sharing of Corrective Actions:

PPI is encouraging your company to participate in this monthly report. Questions should be directed to David Fink at dfink@plasticpipe.org. We look forward to your company's participation so that together we can support each other in continuous improvement of our safety performance.

Contacting the PPI Safety Committee

Contact us at <https://plasticpipe.org/PPI-Home/About/Safety-Contact-Us.aspx> with your topics of interest or to sign up your safety personnel to receive the information and tools outlined above.

Help us to help you improve your safety score!