

TOOLBOX TALK #10

HAND AND ARM PROTECTION

When choosing hand and arm protection for your workers, there are some important factors to consider. Of course, the first thing to consider is what's the application? Any cut, puncture, abrasion, heat, impact or other hazards involved in the job will change what you choose.



Knowing the type and level of protection you need is an important first step. But it can be more complicated than that. For example, if your team is experiencing cut injuries, it's best to think about more than cut level. What may look like a cut may actually be the result of a puncture because its human nature to jerk your hand away when injured, causing a laceration. Factor in variables such as metal burrs that may puncture even a high cut-resistant glove, and investigate all options such as special reinforcements that might make gloves last longer or even special palm coatings to improve grip and abrasion performance.

Perhaps just as important as protection is comfort. Studies have shown that up to 70% of workers who suffer a hand injury weren't wearing gloves during the incident. The culprit in many of these cases isn't that the company didn't provide the right PPE, but that it didn't provide PPE that was comfortable enough for workers to keep it on. Ironically, its possible to end up with a higher injury rate when you over-protect workers with gloves that are too thick, hot or bulky for the job.

This problem is now much easier to solve with the advent of technologies that offer extremely high cut protection in lighter, cooler fabrics. Instead of the bulky, cumbersome gloves of the past, you can get gloves that provide protection as high as Cut Level A9 and that fit with the comfort of a second skin in fabrics that are as much as 30% lighter than comparable gloves. Other materials provide coreless cut protection to keep workers with sensitive skin from developing contact dermatitis, and are actually cool to the touch to keep hands and arms comfortable.

Finding the best gloves and sleeves for workers can sometimes be a difficult task for a company. Utilize your PPE vendors who can evaluate your operation and recommend the best PPE for your particular tasks.