

By The Numbers

- Employers reported a total of 121,800 lost work hours due to hand injuries*
- Employers reported an average of 6 days away from work for hand injuries in 2020*
- Hand injuries requiring medical treatment average \$22,384*
- 70% of hand injuries documented happened when the worker was not wearing gloves*
- Hand surgery recovery takes an average of 4 weeks to 4 months to be considered fit for work
- 100% recovery from hand surgery can take over 1 full year

*US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Complex Machinery

Human hands are marvelous examples of systems engineering. Each hand has 29 major joints, 123 ligaments, 34 muscles, 48 nerves, 30 arteries, and over 17,000 nerve endings! The thumb is controlled by 9 separate muscles.



Have you ever thought about what would happen if we suddenly lost the use of our two most useful tools? Hand injuries can be very severe, altering our quality of life forever.

Unfortunately, there is not a work glove that is best suited for every type of job. Can you imagine an electrician trying to terminate a panel full of wires while wearing welding gloves? Better yet, what about welding using thin, cut-resistant gloves? And, neither of these options will offer sufficient protection from chemicals.

Glove selection is first and foremost determined by the type of protection needed. The National Safety Council has grouped glove materials into the following categories based on how the type of protection needed.

Cotton and fabric gloves – help keep hands clean and protect from abrasions, but not suitable for rough or sharp materials.

Leather gloves – the most versatile material, but it provides varying levels of protection based on the type and thickness. Leather gloves should be used for hot work, and where there is a risk of general cuts and abrasions; however, they will not protect against cuts and punctures as well as cut/puncture resistant materials.



One Glove to Rule Them All...

Coated fabric gloves – provide protection against some moderate concentrated chemicals.

Rubber, plastic or synthetic gloves – can be used when cleaning or working with oils, solvents and other chemicals.

Aluminized gloves – recommended for welding, furnace, and foundry work, as they provide reflective and insulating protection.

Kevlar gloves – another versatile material, Kevlar is resistant to cuts and abrasions, and provides protection against both heat and cold.

Neoprene, Nitrile, Latex, Rubber – protection from chemical exposure (always check the SDS for specific requirements).

Proper glove selection is crucial to preventing exposure to hand hazards. Use the following to help choose the right gloves:

1. Are chemicals present? What form?
2. Are abrasions, punctures, or sharps present?
3. Is a secure grip required for the tasks?
4. How important is dexterity?
5. Which is more important, dexterity or protection?
6. Is heat or cold protection required?
7. How long will the gloves be worn? For a specific task, or all day?
8. Do the gloves fit properly?