

THE SAFETY OBSERVER

Safety Information for Employees

HAND SAFETY

The best chance you have to protect your hands is your own foresight. Anticipating a slip of the wrench or a pinching cabinet door is how you avoid an injury to the “tools” we take for granted the most; our hands. Everyone knows how painful it is to smack your finger with a hammer, or to accidentally touch a hot surface.

Here are some rules to help make you more aware of injuries that are common while at work and home.

- **Expect the unexpected.** When you are using a hand tool or anything that your hands will be applying force, anticipate that the tool can slip, or the object can unexpectedly give way.
- **Inspect your tools.** If your tool is damaged or defective, its use is an accident waiting to happen. Cracked handles, dull blades, stripped or worn parts, and missing guards, are all examples of tools that need to be repaired or disposed of and replaced. Notify your supervisor when you recognize these hazards at your workplace.
- **Watch for closing doors.** If working near or on a door, be aware of what can cause the door to accidentally close. (i.e. – a passing person, the wind, a spring hinge)
- **Wear gloves.** If the work you are performing requires them, use them. They will help your grip and protect your skin from scrapes, gashes, blisters, burns, etc. Because there are many kinds of gloves, be sure to use the appropriate gloves for the job being performed.
- **Replace all safety guards.** When you have finished working on something, make sure all guards and safety devices are securely put back.
- **Be aware of what's hot.** Even if a machine or equipment hasn't been running, make sure the parts that tend to get hot are not hot. Do not assume.
- **Keep your hands and tools clean.** Grease and dirt can cause a slip. Also, keeping your hands and equipment clean may reduce the amount of dirt or bacteria you will come in contact with should an injury break the skin.

No other tools can handle the abuse of your hands and still perform with such precision. We only get two, and they cannot be replaced. Take care of your hands by paying attention to the hazards they are exposed to.

Keep gloves (and goggles) with you at all times. You are likely to need them throughout the day.