FactSheet: Cuts and Lacerations

Cuts and lacerations are one of the most common types of injuries found in the workplace. About sixty (60) USC employees sustained cuts and lacerations (8% of all injuries) through August 2015. Many of these injuries are preventable if the proper safeguards and prevention strategies are used.

What are the common causes of cuts & lacerations?

Common causes of cuts and lacerations include: inadequate workstation lighting; poor workstation setup; bad housekeeping practices; inappropriate use of tools; incorrect PPE used for the job; knives and tools are not well-maintained and stored properly; workers are working too close in proximity to one another; and distractions.

Are all cut-resistant gloves the same?

No. Cut-resistant gloves are made of different materials and coatings. Choose the correct gloves that will provide the protection and flexibility for your unique work activities. Examples of glove materials and a description of their properties are illustrated in the following table.

What I Can Do...

- Use the proper tool for the job.
- Learn established safety procedures for specific activities.
- Request an ergonomic evaluation of my activity and worksite.
- Complete a PPE evaluation with my supervisor. Select the specific cut-resistant gloves for my work duties.

Polyethylene (Spectra® or Dyneema® fiber)
- Not puncture resistant
- Not good for high temperatures
- Chemically resistant to most common compounds

Kevlar® (Para aramid)
- Stronger than steel per unit weight
- Inherently flame resistant up to 800 °F
- Lightweight and flexible for metal and glass handling

Fiberglass
- Typically used in combination with other materials, material is fragile if used independently
- Good thermal resistance
- Chemical resistance is uneven

Metal (Steel) Mesh
- Good for food processing applications
- Very good cut and abrasion resistance
- Generally not puncture resistant

Can cut-resistant gloves be used as protection with powered tools/equipment?

No. Never use cut-resistant gloves as protection against powered tools/equipment. Gloves are manufactured to provide protection against non-powered blades and sharps. Using any type of glove while operating powered tools increases the risk of the machinery catching hold of the glove material. This can pull the user into the equipment and cause injury.

How can I decide which type of cut-resistant gloves to use?

Depending on your job task, you want a glove that offers the maximum amount of protection with enough flexibility for unrestricted movement. Ask your supervisor to assist you in completing a Personal Protection Equipment evaluation to select the appropriate glove for your work duties.

References

OSHA General Hazards: Cuts & Lacerations
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/poultry/general_hazards/cuts_lacerations.html

Grainger Cut Resistant Glove Selection and Use
http://www.grainger.com/content/qt-cut-resistant-glove-301

USC Environmental Health & Safety

University Park Campus
3434 South Grand Ave, CAL 120
Los Angeles, CA 90089-2815

Health Sciences Campus
2001 N Soto St, SBA 329
Los Angeles, CA 90032

323.442.2200
injuryprevention@usc.edu
http://adminopsnet.usc.edu

09/2015