PPE – Hand, Wrist, Fingers Stats & Facts



DID YOU KNOW?

That’s according to 2015 finding released by the American Society of Safety Professionals based on a survey with 400 safety professionals including safety directors, safety specialists, and safety managers.

This comes at the same time as the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that hand injuries were the second most common injury, after lower back injuries.

In a recent US Department of Labor study, of all injures reported, injuries to fingers and hands accounted for more than 23%, making them the highest in preventable injuries and in terms of lost work days, they ranked second only to back and neck injuries.

It was found that a vast majority of employees who suffer hand injuries were not wearing gloves at the time and that many of those injured were wearing the wrong kind of gloves.

Data from the Bureau of Labor statistics confirms the risk. As a result of non-compliance, hand injuries have increased more than 2.5 times.

Medical costs and disability claims have escalated rapidly and the cost of a single injury multiples with each work day missed.

A National Safety Council study reports that the cost of just one disabling hand or finger injury varies from $540 to $26,000 per patient. With a serious upward extremity trauma averaging $730,000 per incident.

According to a recent Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) study, 70.9% of hand and arm injuries could have been prevented with personal protective equipment (PPE), specifically safety gloves.

Each fact above illustrates clearly why education about cut protection is so important.

When it comes to choosing hand protection, the gulf between inadequate traditional materials and advanced scientific fibers is ultimately a battle between old perceptions and the right information.

Cuts and lacerations, on average, resulted in six lost working days for the injured worker.

The most common injuries in 2012, according to BLS research was sprains, strains and tears. This includes injuries to the wrist and hand ligament.

Approximately 8,000 of these injuries required job transfer or restriction in 2012. Healing time for these cases was on average 14 lost working days.

Key Hand Injury Statistics:

110,000 lost-time hand injuries annually

Hand injuries send more than one million workers to the emergency room each year

70 percent of workers who experienced hand injuries were not wearing gloves

The remaining 30 percent of injured workers did wear gloves, but the gloves were inadequate, damaged or the wrong type for the type of hazard present.

As we point on our PPE ROI Calculator, the average hand injury claim is now $6,000, with individual workers' compensation claims reaching nearly $7,500. On average a U.S. automotive worker earns $33.00 an hour and the average reported hand injury results in six days off work.

Keep facts handy: 5 simple statistics to motivate hand protection

The hand is one of the most incredible tools that humans are given right from birth – the energy that runs through you when a newborn baby wraps his whole hand around your finger is extraordinary. If something were to happen to your hands, chances are that you could learn to adapt your daily routines, but it would most certainly be a life-changing experience.

The aim of this article is to look at five simple statistics: Five statistics that on their own may seem irrelevant, but when put together will give you with a new perspective on safety.

Fact #1: The hand is the second most common body part to be injured at work

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported over 143,000 hand-related workplace injuries in 2015, these types of injuries were second only to back injuries (191,450). While hand injuries aren't the deadliest, they can certainly make your day-to-day work much harder. Injuries to the hand can also be more difficult to heal because of the way the hand moves, the wound can open up.

In the same year that BLS reported 143,000 hand injuries, workers lost a median of five work days. In moderate to serious cases, hand injuries mean modified work duties and, in many situations, a loss in income because of the time off work.

Fact #2: You're most at risk for cuts and lacerations

Every year, roughly 30 percent of all workplace injuries are from cuts and lacerations and 12 percent of those were strictly to the hands. These injuries are sustained by everything from nicks and scrapes to knives and heavy machinery. While some of these can be fixed with Neosporin and a Band-Aid,

others require medical attention. Unless the injury is serious enough to warrant a trip to the hospital, it's brushed off as being part of the job or workers are encouraged to work through the pain.

Fact #3: The solution is simple

Your organization may already have gloves available for employees, but a quick look at OSHA's hand injury stats reveals that you probably aren't wearing them. Seventy percent of hand injuries in the United States occur when people are not wearing gloves.

The solution to this common, costly problem is simple. Get a barrier between your hands and whatever the work is that you do. The glove doesn't have to be the most expensive, technologically advanced piece of PPE, but it does need to address the hazards that you face on a daily basis.

If you're an electrician, you'll need to consider cut resistance, puncture resistance, dexterity for small parts and, potentially, protection from arc flash. If you're in construction, you might be more concerned with back-of-hand protection and vibration-dampening palm padding.

Fact #4: Injuries are costly

If you subscribe to the idea that safety gloves aren't necessary because skin grows back, perhaps the financial burden of an injury will convince you that this issue is serious.

As of the 2012-2013 fiscal year, the average total incurred cost per claim in the United States for hand, finger and wrist injuries was $22,384 according to the National Safety Council. Again, that's twenty-two thousand, three hundred and eighty dollars per claim. This includes missed days, hospital visits and shut down time for investigations by OSHA or your local workplace safety bureau.

Along with these factors and increased insurance premiums, workers' compensation and employees on disability leave, U.S. employers in 2013 paid nearly $62 billion. As you begin to create a workplace that encourages safety mindfulness, you should also begin to look at reducing the risk of injuries from common areas outlined by OSHA, like fall hazards, lockout/tagout, and machine guarding.

Fact #5: Toolbox talks work

Young workers, ages 16 to 24, are twice as likely to be hurt on the job because they are less experienced, less trained and more likely to take risks. However, by incorporating regular training, workplaces can see a 42 percent reduction in injury claims.

Regular training doesn't have to be overly complicated; it can be as simple as a daily toolbox talk, where a foreman, supervisor or environmental health and safety leader talks to the group before work starts. During these toolbox talks, you should look to address any violations that you saw the day before – without pinpointing the violator, best practices for people working on particular jobs or machinery and promoting everyone to work safely so that they will step off the worksite in the same healthy condition with which they arrived.

By including these informal, 15-minute talks at the beginning of a shift, you

can keep safety at front of mind for workers at no additional cost to the organization.

Final thoughts

None of the steps listed in this article are particularly revolutionary, and in many ways that’s the point. Creating a safer workplace isn’t rocket science, but it requires buy in from every level of the workforce; starting at the top.

If senior management places an emphasis on safety, then that mentality trickles down to the people who are most at risk. It reminds them that their safety is important and it cultivates a more positive attitude towards safety; meaning less corners are cut to get work done faster.