

May 2023

Safety Focused

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There are approximately 500,000 hand-related injuries in Canada each year, according to government data.



Prioritizing Hand Protection at Work

A wide range of everyday work tasks can put your hands at risk. And while hand injuries on the job are quite common, many are preventable with proper precautions. Consider the following tips to protect your hands while you work and avoid occupational injuries:

- **Make use of machine guards.** Never operate machinery that does not have a working guard to protect your hands. Always use a lockout device on machinery when you need to reach into it for any reason. Immediately replace guards when you remove them.
- **Wear gloves.** Always protect your hands by wearing work gloves when handling rough materials or performing operations where you lift or move objects with your hands. Choose the right gloves for the task and inspect them thoroughly before use.
- **Be cautious of sharp objects.** Utilize the correct safety procedures when handling knives, box cutters and other sharp objects. Don't pick up broken glass, nails or other dangerous items not meant for handling with bare hands.

If you are unsure about the type of gloves to wear to adequately protect yourself, or if you have any other issues regarding the protection of your hands on the job, talk to your supervisor.

Using Safety Data Sheets

When working with chemicals, you must become familiar with these substances' key characteristics so you can take the proper safety precautions and avoid serious incidents. That's where safety data sheets (SDSs) can help.

An SDS provides information about a substance's unique properties, precautions for safe handling, tips for adequate use and storage, potential health hazards and first-aid procedures. Prior to working with a new chemical, always reference its associated SDS.

The easiest way to locate a substance's SDS is by reviewing the chemical name listed on the product's label. The SDS information may seem a bit confusing at first, so here are the main details to look out for:

- Chemical identification
- Hazard identification
- Composition/information on ingredients
- First-aid measures
- Firefighting procedures
- Accidental release protocols
- Handling and storage practices
- Exposure controls and personal protection measures
- Physical and chemical properties
- Stability and reactivity considerations
- Toxicological information
- Ecological information



- Disposal considerations
- Transport information
- Regulatory information
- Other information (if applicable)

It's best to review a chemical's SDS, learn the substance's hazardous properties and understand appropriate emergency response measures before an incident occurs. For example, if a chemical splashes into a co-worker's eyes, you'll want to know how to help immediately rather than waste valuable time by having to track down the SDS for first-aid recommendations.

Remember, while SDS instructions can be helpful in emergencies, they do not replace those of a health care professional. If a chemical incident does occur, be sure to contact the appropriate medical personnel immediately.

Consult your supervisor for more information on avoiding chemical hazards at work.