

Gloves

Why it's important

Gloves are just as important as any other piece of personal protective equipment. Appropriate work gloves provide effective protection to the hands and arms. Many workers don't wear gloves because they're uncomfortable to wear or use when working. That's why proper fitting gloves are so important.

- Poorly fitting gloves increase the amount of force required from the forearms and hands.
- Tight-fitting gloves can cause pressure on the hands, limit dexterity and increase perspiration, leading to fatigue and injuries.
- Loose-fitting gloves reduce grip strength, impair dexterity and productivity and can cause other safety hazards.

How to control the hazards

- If the gloves fit properly, wearing them will become second nature.
- Companies need to ensure that the proper size of glove is selected for all workers. One size does not fit all workers.
- Gloves can prevent repetitive-type injuries such as tendonitis by requiring less force from the fingers to do the task.
- If the work task involves arm-hand vibration, this must also be considered when purchasing the glove. Some gloves are designed to reduce the effects of arm-hand vibration.
- One size does not fit all. For example, in a veneer operation the worker who is handling the veneer may need fingerless-type gloves, while a maintenance worker in the same department needs an entirely different type of glove. Even within the maintenance department there will be variations depending on the task. For example, handling saws requires a different type of glove than welding.
- When selecting a type of glove, here are some key questions to ask:

- How often will the task or tasks be done, and for how long?
- What degree of finger dexterity will be required?
- What hazards will the worker be exposed to while doing the work? (For example, factors such as temperature, chemicals being handled, overall resistance, and whether a cuff is needed.)
- If the worker is using a tool, what type of surface does it have? (For example, a slippery surface requires a textured glove so that you can maintain a good grip.)
- Among the early signs of worker MSDs are discomfort, pain, numbness, tingling, weakness and/or restrictions in movements.
- It's important that workers bring any concerns about health and safety to their supervisor and JHSC or H&S representative, so that they know what to focus on.
- Once ergonomic hazard controls have been put in place, they need to be monitored by supervisors and the JHSC or H&S representative.

Show and tell

Using several different types and sizes of gloves, explain why your firm chooses to use a particular kind for a particular purpose. Have participants try on the different types and sizes to see and feel the difference in the different gloves. Use a tailor's tape to have participants measure the size of their hands for a proper glove fitting.

How to properly fit a glove:

To make sure the glove you choose is a proper fit:

Extend your hand out flat.

Measure your hand with a tailor's tape. Measure around the hand just below the knuckles and fingers, but above the thumb.

Measure your dominant hand, as it is generally a bit larger.