

Quick facts **Hand injuries in Saskatchewan**

- 20.2 per cent of all WCB claims between 2013 and 2017 are due to hand injuries in the workplace.
- 42.3 per cent of hand injury claims were from cuts and lacerations.

Causes of hand injuries

A cut, puncture or laceration can happen quickly, but its scar and damage can last forever. This type of injury is commonly caused by:

- Dull cutting tools
- Jagged edges
- Sharp metals
- Pointed objects
- Glass
- Nails

Hazards

Typical hazards and possible causes of cuts and lacerations in the workplace can include:

- Improper or lack of training
- Lack of established safety procedures
- Employees rushing or taking shortcuts
- Failure to select and wear proper hand protection for the specific task
- Missing or improperly adjusted guarding equipment



Tips for prevention

Hand injury prevention

- Keep tools properly maintained and in good working condition.
- Keep hands and fingers away from sharp edges of cutting tools.
- Pass tools to other workers to handle first.
- Store tools properly and safely when not in use. Always replace covers on sharp tools and store so you grasp the handle first. This also helps to maintain tools.
- Make sure all tools and cutting devices have proper grips and handles.
- Use suction cups or magnetic pads to carry large sheets of glass or metal.
- Never use a screwdriver on work being done in your hands.
- Always do work on a flat, stable surface.
- Always wear proper hand protection for the job, selecting the correct glove for the task being performed.
- Flatten or remove any nails that may cause puncture wounds.
- Practice good housekeeping – keep a clean work area.
- Only use tools for the job they were made to do. (i.e. Don't use a file or screwdriver as a lever.)
- Always cut in a direction away from your body.

Hand protection

Many hazard controls will include selecting and wearing proper protective gloves. Here are some questions to ask when selecting the proper gloves:

- Are cuts and lacerations from sharp objects a problem?
- Is a secure grip vital to the application?
- Is dexterity important?
- Are the gloves properly sized for individual workers?

To select the proper glove, perform a hazard and risk assessment of the task. Then choose a glove that provides the proper protection against the hazards associated with the task being completed.

The most common materials used in cut-resistant gloves, listed from least to most cut-resistant, are:

Glove type	Function	Recommended use
Cotton & string knit	Keeps hands clean, improves grip, insulates from mild heat or cold, and provides some protection from cuts and scrapes.	Light duty, general material handling activities and clean-up work.
Leather	Provides more protection against injury than cotton and string gloves. Protects against rough surfaces, sharp edges and objects that cut or puncture skin.	Equipment handling, automotive work and general construction.
Kevlar fiber	Offers high cut resistance due to its synthetic fibers.	Activities that require more dexterity, such as working with metal and glass.
Spectra fiber	Provides cut resistance when wet due to its polyethylene fibers.	Metalwork, warehouse work, general maintenance, automotive work and food preparation.
Dyneema fiber	Offers advanced protection due to the gel-spun, multi-filament fibers created from polyethylene.	Metalwork, automotive work and working with heavy equipment.
Metal mesh	Provides advanced cut and puncture resistance due to its interlocked stainless-steel mesh composition.	Metalwork, textile cutting and food preparation.