

## **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
<b>Cotton &amp; string knit</b>	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.
<b>Leather</b>	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.
<b>Kevlar fiber</b>	Offers high cut resistance due to its synthetic fibers.	Activities that require more dexterity, such as working with metal and glass.
<b>Spectra fiber</b>	Provides cut resistance when wet due to its polyethylene fibers.	Metalwork, warehouse work, general maintenance, automotive work and food preparation.
<b>Dyneema fiber</b>	Offers advanced protection due to the gel-spun, multi-filament fibers created from polyethylene.	Metalwork, automotive work and working with heavy equipment.
<b>Metal mesh</b>	Provides advanced cut and puncture resistance due to its interlocked stainless-steel mesh composition.	Metalwork, textile cutting and food preparation.