

Hand safety



Hand safety is of paramount importance at Perth Airport. Construction projects are filled with potential hazards that can cause hand injuries if proper precautions are not taken. The hands are involved in almost every task performed on a construction site, making them particularly vulnerable to incidents.

What you need to know

High risk of injuries: Construction sites expose workers to numerous hazards such as falling objects, sharp tools, machinery, electrical equipment, and hazardous materials. Without adequate hand protection, workers are at a higher risk of cuts, lacerations, punctures, abrasions, fractures, and even amputations.

Impact on workers' lives: Hand injuries can have a significant impact on workers' lives. Severe hand injuries may lead to permanent disability, loss of fingers or hands, and can even result in the inability to perform basic tasks or return to work. This not only affects the injured worker but also their families and overall quality of life.

Lost productivity: When a hand injury is sustained, a Worker may require time off work for recovery and rehabilitation. This leads to reduced productivity and can cause project delays. Additionally, other workers may need to take on additional responsibilities, affecting overall efficiency and increasing the risk of errors or accidents.

Regulatory compliance: Work health and safety regulations mandate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) on construction sites, including hand protection. Employers have a legal obligation to provide workers with appropriate PPE, such as gloves, to minimise the risk of hand injuries. Compliance with these regulations helps protect workers and avoid penalties or legal repercussions.

Safety culture and morale: Prioritising hand safety fosters a positive safety culture within the construction industry. When employers demonstrate a commitment to worker safety, it enhances morale and motivates employees to follow safety protocols. A safe and healthy work environment encourages greater job satisfaction and loyalty among workers.

Hand safety a safety essential

To ensure hand safety on construction sites, several measures can be taken, such as providing workers with appropriate gloves for specific tasks, conducting regular safety training and toolbox talks, implementing engineering controls to minimise hand hazards, maintaining equipment properly, and promoting a culture of safety awareness and compliance.

There are many types of gloves for any task. Employers have a responsibility to provide the appropriate equipment to perform any given task safely. This includes PPE, which must also comply with the appropriate Australian Standard for gloves.





Glove reference guide

Cotton and disposable

Cotton gloves provide very minimal protection to hands. Disposable Nitrile gloves provide prevention of hydro-carbon and liquid absorption into skin



Nitrile dipped gloves

Provide excellent protection when dealing with oils, lubricants, and petroleum liquids. Can be found with a cut resistant rating.



Leather gloves

Provide protection to hands from the elements as well as scrapes but seldom provide any cut resistant protection. Best used when handling such materials as wood and bricks.



Cut resistant dexterity gloves

Available in ratings from 1-5. Should be worn any time you are handling tools or materials that could easily cut or scrape your skin. (i.e.) Using self retracting blades, handling duct work, using a saw, handling glass or working with light fixtures. (Best practice would be to wear this type always to avoid Injury to hands).



What you must do

Workers should always consider the risks their hands may be exposed to as a result from the tasks they are preparing to undertake. This allows workers to select the appropriate form of hand protection. Consider the following:

Cuts

- Will you be handling sharp objects, materials, or equipment?
- Could the item you are handling break while you are holding or moving them?
- What could happen to your hands if you dropped the item?

Pinches

- Where will your hands be positioned at the beginning and at the end of this task?
- Can your hands be caught between or underneath the item you are moving?
- Do you have enough room to move the item from start to finish without difficulty?

Crushing

- Can anything fall onto your hands during this task?
- Will your hands be exposed to any equipment, components or materials which can shift, drop, fall or release unexpectedly?

Burns

- What is the temperature of item you intend to handle?
- Where has the item come from prior to you handling it?
- What is the temperature of the surface you are landing the item on?

Infections

- Are your hands at risk of infection before handling this object?
- Could the material you are handling cause an infection if it got into your skin?
- Could someone else become infected by you, after you have handled it?