



PROGRAMMED

SAFETY ALERT

SA 242 – Hand and Finger Injuries

Background

Protecting your hands and fingers is important for your work and quality of life. We use our hands for the majority of tasks we carry out both at work and at home.

Hand and finger injuries are however among the most common type of workplace injuries. Over the last few months there have been several hand and finger injuries. Some of these injuries have included;

- An employee broke two fingers when they got their hand caught between a piece of sheet metal coil and a guard rail while trying to place it down;
- Another employee received 5 stitches after lacerating their hand when performing as they were not wearing gloves while carrying out a cutting task;
- Another employee's fingers were pinned between while loading steel bundles on a truck when another employee dropped the steel quickly.

Safety Issues

Keeping our hands and fingers out of harm's way at work is critical. There are many hazards that can result in hand injuries including;

- Punctures, cuts or lacerations – caused by contact with sharp, spiked or jagged edges on equipment, tools or materials;
- Crushed, fractures or amputations – caused by contact with rotating equipment, belts, wheels and rollers, falling objects, gloves or clothing getting caught and putting your hand in harm's way;
- Strains, sprains, and other musculoskeletal injuries – caused by using the wrong tool for the job, or one that is too big, small or heavy for your hand;
- Burns – caused by direct contact with a hot surface or a chemical.

- Dermatitis and other skin disorders – caused by direct contact with chemicals in products and materials.

A serious injury to an individual's hands or fingers can have a significant negative impact on their ability to work and overall quality of life.

RECOMMENDED WAYS TO CONTROL RISK

- Before you use equipment or start a task, think about the ways your hands may become injured i.e. pinch points, rotating parts, sharp edges etc.
- Be aware of your surroundings and WATCH where you place your hands.
- Only safety knives should be used when cutting and ALWAYS cut away from the body.
- COMMUNICATE with each other when performing team tasks
- Be CAUTIOUS around short cut taking
- ONLY use tools and equipment that are designed for the work being performed
- Keep guards on machinery and power tools in place – Don't remove or reposition them.
- Wear the correct PPE - Wear gloves that fit your hand and are appropriate for the work being performed
- Do not wear loose jewellery or clothing that could get caught on a moving objects.
- CHECK tools and equipment to make sure they are in proper working order before beginning a task.
- Identify safety features on tools and equipment before you use them, such as emergency off switches.

For more information regarding this incident please contact:

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Report all incidents and near misses

Please display on Safety Noticeboards and raise this matter at the next Toolbox Talk or Safety Meeting.