

A close-up photograph of a person's right hand holding a single brass key. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the thumb and index finger gripping the key's head. The key is held horizontally, pointing towards the right. The background is a solid dark blue color, which transitions to a white background at the top and bottom of the image. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the metallic sheen of the key.

THE KEY TO HAND INJURY PREVENTION



The Effects of a Hand Injury

According to government and industry statistics, hand injuries represent nearly a third of all reported workplace incidents. Approximately 75% of industrial injuries that cause partial disability involve the hands; over 16 million individuals seek emergency care each year for hand injuries.



Types of Hand Injuries

Because of their tremendous versatility, hands are exposed and susceptible to many types of injuries:

- strains and sprains from excessive force
- excessive repetitive motion
- awkward posture
- contact with surface conditions
- burns
- punctures
- fractures



Common Hand Hazards

Common hazards in the workplace can include sharp objects, hand and power tools, hot objects, pinch points, chemicals, energy sources, moving equipment and machinery.

Poor housekeeping is a contributing cause to these types of injuries. Proper housekeeping is an essential element in a safe work environment.



Common Hand Hazards

The greatest hazard posed by hand tools results from the improper use and maintenance of the tool.

Use the tool only for its designed purpose.

Hand tools should be inspected before each use.

A defective tool should be repaired before use or removed from service.



Common Hand Hazards

One of the most common causes of hand injuries is blunt trauma; this usually occurs around machinery and moving equipment when established procedures are not followed or are by-passed. Because of the weight and force often involved, the consequences can be severe.

Respect the equipment you work around. You may think you are doing your company a favor increasing productivity by rushing or taking shortcuts, but the risk of injury wipes all that out.



Controlling Hazards

Know where your hands are at all times. Keep them away from moving parts of machinery and points of operation.

Make sure guards are in place and used. Report any missing guards to your supervisor.

Isolate energy sources and lock out equipment before placing your hands in potential points of contact. Thousands of workers are injured each day due to failure to properly lock out and tag out equipment.



Controlling Hazards

Don't wear gloves, loose clothing or jewelry that can get caught in equipment and pull your hands in.

It is important to maintain your concentration and focus at all time when working around moving equipment and machinery.



Musculoskeletal Disorders

Musculoskeletal disorders, MSD's, also referred to as repetitive motion injuries are caused by excessive force, excessive repetition and awkward posture. These types of injuries are beneath the skin to the muscles, tendons, and ligaments of the hand and wrists.

Common symptoms can include pain, numbness, tingling sensation, swelling, and tenderness to the touch.

MSD's are not the result of a single event like other hand injuries, but are the result of cumulative exposure to the risk factors mentioned earlier.



Commitment, Participation & Communication

Hand injuries are one of the most frequently occurring injuries in the workplace. Successful hand injury prevention requires your commitment, participation and communications.

Most hand injuries occur when we stop thinking about safety, when we don't accurately assess the risk, or when we lack awareness of the position of our hands.

Safety is a personal responsibility. Understand and respect the potential hazards; assess the risk for the task you perform.



Commitment, Participation & Communication

Communicate unsafe conditions and report all injuries to your supervisors.

You have a choice: don't compromise your safety to save a few minutes. Respect the risk and keep your hands out of harm's way.

Injuries occur because your hands were in the wrong place at the wrong time; don't allow that to happen. You control the safety of your hands.