

PLAYING IT SAFE

Be safe and healthy on the job with these helpful tips provided by Peabody Insurance Agency.

Keep Your Hands, Wrists and Fingers Safe

Helpful tips for reducing your risk of injury at work

Hand, wrist and finger injuries are among the most common ailments suffered by workers, and they can be both extremely painful and debilitating. An occupational injury not only causes initial pain – it can also require weeks or months of rehabilitation.

Sources of Injury

Throughout the day, your hands come in contact with a multitude of hazards such as heavy or fast-moving machine parts, sharp tools and corrosive chemicals. The following is a sampling of hand, wrist and finger hazards you might face on the job every day:

- Cutting tools operating at high speeds
- Heavy machinery
- Extreme temperatures
- Pinch points
- Equipment without machine guards
- Wearing clothing that can get caught in a machine

On-the-Job Protection

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is designed to shield your body from hazards. Since the hands, wrists and fingers are so susceptible to injuries, there are many varieties of PPE to choose from and that your employer may require.

- Select gloves that are appropriate for the task at hand. Make sure they are long enough to cover your wrists and fit correctly. Gloves that are too big can get caught in machinery, and gloves that are too small wear out easily.

- Leather gloves provide protection from bruises, cuts and minor burns. Cut-resistant gloves offer shielding from sharp-edged tools. Heat-resistant gloves offer protection against burns. Rubber, vinyl or neoprene gloves shield hands from corrosive materials.
- Barrier creams applied to the skin provide an invisible protective coating against minor irritations.
- Guards or hand pads protect against heat and abrasive materials.
- Finger guards protect against pinch hazards.

Recognize Hazards

While PPE will shield you to some extent, you also must learn how to recognize potential hazards and then take the proper steps to avoid them. Consider the following recommendations while on the job:

- Develop a “safety first” attitude and take time to familiarize yourself with the hazards in your working environment. Become familiar with all equipment and know what others are doing around you.
- Concentrate on the task at hand, even when you’re frustrated or when there are distractions.
- Use common sense and remain alert for unexpected problems. Be wary of possible hazards.



Serious Risks

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data, there are about 200,000 hand, wrist and finger injuries in private industry per year, resulting in an average of seven days away from work for an injured worker.