



Hand Injury Statistics and Symptoms of Infection

We have all seen lots of occupational injury stats through the years, but here are some that are a little startling:

- In 2012, workers suffered 186,830 nonfatal injuries to the hands and wrists serious enough to warrant days away from work
- That equates to 511 hand and wrist-related lost-time injuries every day of the year
- In 2014, there were about 100,000 cut, lacerations, and punctures (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)—these numbers include both the more serious cuts and those where workers are simply treated on-site and sent back to work

I want to express that the last bullet item only involved those cut/laceration/puncture injuries that got reported. There are probably more than 5X the amount of nicks, cuts, and scrapes that simply go unreported to an employer. Many employees simply feel embarrassed about reporting a minor incident or they don't want the hassle of filling out a report. Whatever the case may be, one could argue that 95% or more of these injuries could have been fully or partially prevented by wearing an appropriate glove for the work application.

Simply cuts and punctures have the ability to cause a staph infection and you can even eventually get sepsis (caused when the body overreacts to an infection). Sepsis attacks organs and tissues, causing a life-threatening drop in blood pressure and organ failure (might be rare for a cut injury, but does happen!). Every year, severe sepsis strikes more than 1 million Americans, and it is

estimated between 28–50% of these people die (according to the National Institute of General Medical Sciences).

If you ever get a finger cut/puncture and decide not to go to the doctor, you need to learn the early recognition signs that an infection might be happening. Most infections are caused by bacteria. Symptoms vary widely. A burning or itching sensation may be present. There may be mild swelling and you could have a low grade fever. If the motion of the fingers and hand is painful or difficult, this may indicate a deep space infection of some type. This is why it is important for employees to report any and all hand injuries. Something that seems very minor could result into something pretty serious.

The biggest complaint with glove usage is the bulkiness or “lack of feel” for the tasks that the employee must perform. We need to try and better understand the employees’ complaints of the gloves they are currently being offered and find appropriate alternatives. Technology has dramatically improved in recent years and the old excuses should no longer be valid. Productivity of the American worker should no longer be hampered by having to wear a pair of protective gloves.

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