

LOSS PREVENTION TIPS

Hands Personal Protective Equipment for Landscape & Horticultural Workers

Landscape and horticultural workers are exposed to many hazards while performing their duties. Some of the most common injuries sustained are hand and finger wounds. While these injuries cannot be eliminated, an employer can reduce the number and severity of injuries by taking some preventative steps.

The OSHA Standard

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates worker safety as it relates to hand protection via OSHA standard 1910.138. Essentially, the standard states that employers must select and require employees to use the appropriate gloves when the job exposes employees to cuts, lacerations, burns, harmful temperatures and/or the absorption of harmful substances.

Note: Other state and local laws may apply. Employers should consider consulting trade associations as well as legal counsel familiar with OSHA, state and local safety regulations.

What Gloves to Use

Unlike personal protective equipment for head, eyes and feet, OSHA does not have specific standards for gloves, nor does the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

OSHA does recommend that selection be based “upon the tasks to be performed and the performance and construction characteristics of the glove material.” This means the employer should evaluate the activities involved in a particular job and select the appropriate gloves. For example:

- Fabric gloves for protection against dirt, slivers, chafing and abrasions
- Leather gloves for handling sharp, rough objects and exposure to sustained heat
- Synthetic/neoprene gloves for working with pesticides and chemicals

Whatever the selection, **the key is that the gloves must fit properly.** Gloves that are too large may get caught in machinery and cause a severe laceration, amputation or worse.

Preventive Measures

The best way to prevent finger and hand injuries is to train employees not to use them as tools. Workers often do not think twice about using their fingers to remove objects from parts that have pinch, cut and crush points. Employers should demonstrate the proper method of performing various tasks so that employees have a full understanding of the procedures to follow for any given situation.

Also, since speed and convenience are often the reasons why employees take unnecessary risks, it is up to the employer to make it clear that the time spent doing things safely is valued more than the time saved doing things in a dangerous manner.

For More Information

You can find more information about the topic in this bulletin as well as useful information about other worker safety topics at the OSHA website at <http://www.osha.gov>.



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