

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Hazard Awareness: Picking the Right Glove



Our hands are one of our most valuable assets. Without them, we wouldn't be able to touch, hold, feel, write, or talk (hand gestures assisted). Matter of fact, we could hardly do anything. It is a fact that most folks, all of us probably, take our hands for granted. We don't pay attention as to how we treat them until we have a minor injury, like a small cut or bruise. At that point, we probably think about them momentarily, but as the injury heals, we forget them again.

We should be cognizant of how we protect them when we are doing field or yard work, cutting, welding, using chemicals, or exposure to actual blood samples. It is also important to wear the right glove for the job that you are doing. Cotton gloves aren't intended for welding or using a cutting torch, nor are welders' gloves intended for fieldwork.

Work standards in some industries require employees to wear protective gloves where they are exposed to hazards. There are guidelines for employees to know what glove is required for their particular type of work.

COTTON is the most widely "abused" material in glove fabrics, but also is the most widely used one:

- **Advantages** - Fabric is low in cost, absorbs perspiration, versatile in many uses, more cut resistant than leather, moderate level of abrasion, and protects against heat.
- **Disadvantages** – Limited cut protection, short life span (thermal application range is limited to about 400 degrees.)

PROTECT YOUR HANDS!

***YOU NEED THEM TO
PICK UP YOUR
PAYCHECK!***

LEATHER is the next most widely used glove fabric:

- **Advantages** – Has good puncture resistance, good abrasion resistance, helps cushion blows to the hand, absorbs impacts, shields against sparks, and possesses greater thermal protection than cotton.
- **Disadvantages** -- Has limited cut resistance - limited dexterity, depending upon the thickness and "hand" of the leather.

NATURAL RUBBER, NITRILE, NEOPRENE, AND PVC are new elastomers used in gloves:

- **Advantages** – Liquid-proof for resistance against caustics, acids, and other chemicals.
- **Disadvantages** – Very little cut resistance, puncture resistance, little protection against sparks.

METAL MESH, AND FIBERS SUCH AS KEVLAR, SPECTRA, AND VECTRAN:

- **Advantages** – Flexible, cut resistance, lightweight, and resists thermal transfer.
- **Disadvantages** – May be costly.

Wearing gloves is important, but what is also important is to maintain personal hygiene and keep your hands free from infection.

Another great hand protection item is pre-moistened, heavy-duty hand towels. This type of towel is good to clean heavy grease and grime before you leave the job location. The "bottom line" is that we must be conscious of taking care of hands as we do our other assets. Very little can be accomplished without them.