



SAFETY ALERT

Hand-Related Incidents

RISK MANAGEMENT & SAFETY

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Category: Hand Safety
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Situation:

Since the start of this year, there have been 141 hand-related injuries reported to RMS.

- 70 to the hands, 54 to the fingers, and 17 to the wrists.

Background:

Hand injuries come in all shapes and sizes. Abrasions, broken bones, strains, and dislocations are just a few, but more commonly, employees experience lacerations and pinches while performing various types of activities.

- Some common items that can cause laceration injuries are:
 - ⇒ Knives
 - ⇒ Glass
 - ⇒ Box cutters
 - ⇒ Needles
 - ⇒ Sheet metal
- Fingers could be pinched and severely injured when using items such as:
 - ⇒ Ladders
 - ⇒ Hand tools such as pliers
 - ⇒ Folding chairs
 - ⇒ Toolboxes



How we use our hands and the ergonomics behind our repetitive processes are also important. Some tasks that we repeat over and over have the potential for sprains or strains, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, or even osteoarthritis.

Assessment:

Many of the injuries sustained this year were found to be the result of human error, such as:

- Complacency and being distracted when following routine processes, lack of proper personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves) or lack of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for employees to follow.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Exercise diligence when working with your hands.
- ✓ Before beginning any task, take a moment to identify any possible hazards that could compromise your health and ability to use your hands.
- ✓ Make sure equipment is in good condition and turned off before attempting to clean or perform maintenance (this includes checking for any remaining energy or movement in the device as well).
- ✓ Utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for the tasks at hand ← *pun intended*.
- ✓ If you feel you are in an unsafe situation, consult with your supervisor to see if the hazards can be eliminated or reduced before proceeding.
- ✓ Always follow your department's established SOP for any task.

Need additional resources?

For more safety information, please visit the RMS website <http://riskmanagement.nd.edu/>

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