How to Protect Hands, Wrists and Fingers
Helpful tips for reducing your risk of injury at work

According to the Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR), fingers and hands are the most injured body parts among construction workers, accounting for a third of all emergency room visits. An occupational injury causes initial pain and can require weeks or months of rehabilitation.

Hazards
Throughout the day, your hands come in contact with a multitude of hazards, including the following:
• Cutting tools operating at high speeds
• Heavy, fast moving machinery
• Extreme temperatures
• Pinch points
• Equipment without machine guards
• Wearing clothing that can get caught in a machine
• Corrosive chemicals

Precautions
To avoid suffering from a hand, wrist or finger injury, you must learn how to recognize potential hazards and then take the proper steps to avoid them. Take the following precautions:
• 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, and avoid distractions.
• Use common sense and remain alert for unexpected problems.

Personal Protective Equipment
Consider the following types of personal protective equipment (PPE):
• Gloves 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 to provide protection from bruises, cuts and minor burns. Cut-resistant gloves to offer shielding from sharp-edged tools. Heat-resistant gloves to offer protection against burns. Rubber, vinyl or neoprene gloves to shield hands from corrosive materials.
• Barrier creams applied to the skin to provide an invisible protective coating against minor irritations.
• Guards or hand pads to protect against heat and abrasive materials.
• Finger guards to protect against pinch hazards.