



## PICKING THE PROPER GLOVE



Your hands are one of your most valuable assets. Without them, you wouldn't be able to touch, hold, feel, write or gesture. In fact, you couldn't do much of anything. Too often, however, we take them for granted. We don't pay attention to how we treat or mistreat them! Just a few examples of when your hands should be protected is whenever you are cutting, painting, welding, or handling sharp metal, chemicals, needles, or blood samples. And it is very important to wear the right glove for each specific task, since no one glove protects against all hazards.

Standards require workers to wear appropriate protection whenever their hands are exposed to hazards, and lists guidelines for employees to follow when selecting and purchasing the proper gloves. The following list points out the advantages and disadvantages of certain gloves.

The most widely used and "abused" glove material is cotton.

- Advantages: low cost; perspiration absorption; versatility in application; more cut resistance than leather; moderate abrasion and heat protection.
- Disadvantages: cut protection is limited; short lifetime; thermal application range limited to about 400 F.

The next most widely used form of hand protection is leather.

- Advantages: good puncture resistance and abrasion resistance; absorbs impact and helps cushion blows to the hand; shields against sparks; greater thermal protection than cotton.
- Disadvantages: limited cut resistance; limited dexterity, depending on thickness of leather.

Natural rubber, neoprene, nitrile, PVC are among many elastomers used for gloves.

- Advantages: liquid-proof for resistance against caustics, acids and other chemicals.
- Disadvantages: offer limited cut resistance.

Metal mesh and other new fibers known as Kevlar, Spectra, and Vectran

- Advantages: flexible, cut resistant, lightweight, and resist thermal transfer.
- Disadvantages: may be costly

Washes and creams: Wearing gloves is important, but it is also important to maintain personal hygiene and keep your hands clean to prevent infection. If you use barrier creams, always be sure to wash your hands before putting on the cream, and at the end of the day, when you are ready to go home. Barrier creams provided limited protection against alkali's and acids, but are sometimes used in conjunction with gloves.

Another great hand protection tool is the pre-moistened heavy-duty hand towels. Employees can use these towels to remove heavy grease and grime at their workstations or remote job sites.