

Cuts and Lacerations

Two of the most common types of injuries suffered on the job today are cuts and lacerations.

It doesn't take much imagination to visualize most of the sources of such injuries. Each job has its own hazards that produce these injuries. This is even true of office staff, who can be cut by paper edges and punctured by staplers, scissors and thumbtacks.

However, there are more serious injuries. Of these, perhaps the most likely to become infected is the deep puncture wound; this is even more likely than the torn edges of a laceration. But here antiseptics can reach and generally cleanse the wound.

Let's look at the sources of these wounds. The dangers of protruding nails, screws, staples, splinters and steel bands are present. Before handling wooden crates especially, examine the exterior for any of these hazards. Drums, barrels and carboys may also be hazardous. If the tops are cut out of metal drums, for example, sharp, jagged edges may be exposed. Barrels may have metal slivers or sharp edges, and carboys can have splinters and metal protrusions.

Flat metal sheets can have very sharp edges and the scrap left after cutting sheet metal can cause cuts and punctures.

Hand tools such as awls, screwdrivers, drawing knives, chisels, saws, planes, files, drills, punches and scrapers can puncture or cut.

Machine tools--circular saws, band saws, planers, joiners, sanders, edgers, millers, drills, lathes, sharpeners and grinding wheels can also cut and lacerate.

Other things involved in manufacturing processes, such as machine parts, castings, stamping, rods and bar stock may have hazardous edges and corners.

In many of the processes mentioned, these hazards can be reduced by wearing gloves --except when hands are near revolving machine parts, where the glove can be caught and the fingers or hand drawn into the machine.

Probably the most common "cutter" of all is broken glass. The best safety advice for dealing with that hazard is don't pick up the glass with your hands. Use a broom and sweep it up. Dispose of it in a safe place where no one else can be injured by it; in addition, warn the housekeeping crew.

Good common sense and following rules will usually keep us safe from cut, laceration and puncture injuries.