

## *Hand Protection*

More than a hammer or a drill, your hands are the most essential tool to completing your work. Your hands take center stage in drilling, lifting, cutting, and just about any task at your worksite. To ensure the safety of your hands and to continue with a healthy workday, let's consider the most common types of hand injuries, and what you can do to prevent them.

1. Repetitive Motion injuries: These injuries happen over time, and are the result of continuous repeated movements by your hands. When you find yourself in the position of needing to use your hands in a repeated manner for a long period of time, consider the following tips: If you have the opportunity, shift tasks every so often to give your hands a break from the repetitive motion. If comfortable, change the position of your hands or your grip to lessen the impact on your hands.

2. Contact Injuries: This type of injury lives up to its name: it occurs when you come into contact with acids, corrosive material, solvents, or other substances that cause burns or tissue damage. These are by far the simplest injuries to avoid: Make sure you understand the danger of the product you are using (read the safety warning on the label), wear proper gloves according to the substance you are in contact with, and be sure to wash your hands after completing your task.

3. Traumatic Injuries: These injuries occur when your hand or fingers are caught, pinched or crushed in machinery, pieces of wood or wheels; they may also be cut from sharp edges or tools. To avoid any traumatic injury to your hands, make sure you remove all jewelry (and tuck in clothing) that may get caught, use appropriate safety gloves for the task, and make sure you handle tools and any other sharp material with great care.

Before you start each workday, be sure you have appropriate work gloves available, and be aware of any extra precaution you may need to take: be it removing a bracelet or simply reading a label for possible warnings. Your hands will thank you for it!