



# SAFETY EMPHASIS

Missouri Department of Transportation

## *Hand Protection*

Next to our eyes, our hands are probably the most important part of our body when it comes to doing our work. They're involved in almost every thing we do. Yet many of the things we do with our hands are done without any deliberate thought. Your hands have no fear, and they only act as wisely as the person to whom they belong.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, injuries to the hand, wrist and finger (23 percent of total workplace injuries) are second in number only to back injuries (24.7 percent). The bureau estimates there are approximately 110,000 lost-time hand injuries annually.

The MoDOT Employee Safety Hand Book states hand protection shall be worn when working with hot material such as asphalt; when welding or cutting; and when handling chemicals as required by MSDS. Anti-vibration gloves shall be worn when operating equipment with vibratory hazards such as jackhammers, chain saws, vibratory tampers, concrete saws, and pavement breakers, etc., unless the equipment has built-in anti-vibration protection, in which case the anti-vibration gloves are not required.

It is recommended that all department employees wear leather work gloves when engaged in field operations, equipment fabrication and warehousing activities. The distribution center carries a variety of gloves for those tasks.

## *Dangers of Work Gloves*

While work gloves provide beneficial protection, they can be dangerous if worn around moving parts. The rotating and moving parts of machinery, power tools and equipment can grip gloves and pull hands and arms into moving equipment. While incidents due to contact with rotating equipment are not frequent, the severity of the resulting injuries can be great.

Nip points (as on rotating gears, power take-offs and chipper-shredder devices) pose a special danger when machine parts rotate toward each other or when one rotates toward a stationary object. Gloves can trap fingers and arms in the turning mechanism, which can severely bruise or crush hands or arms.

It is extremely important you don't wear work gloves around machinery or equipment with exposed chains, sprockets, belts and pulleys, gears and pinions or other moving parts that could grab the gloves and injure you. Sometimes accidents can cause amputations, maiming and even death.

When it comes to protecting your hands, here are a few tips to remember:

- Wear gloves whenever possible
- Pay attention to the task being performed
- Use the proper tools
- Avoid shortcuts
- Make sure equipment has hand guards in place



***Be Careful Out There***