SHOW OF HANDS:

INSIGHTS AND STRATEGIES TO PREVENT HAND INJURIES

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INTRODUCTION

The human hand contains 34 muscles, 27 bones, another 27 joints, and over a hundred tendons and ligaments. It's among the most complex body parts. You know that hand injuries are a problem. But you might not recognize just how complicated of a problem they are.

On one hand, safety is personal. On the other hand, safety is cultural.

On one hand, PPE plays a huge role in hand safety. On the other hand, gloves should be the last line of defense—and when using some types of equipment, gloves shouldn't be worn at all.

On one hand, the safety rules regarding hands are clear. On the other hand, human factors cause workers to overlook those rules on a daily basis.

On one hand, you know what to do to prevent hand injuries—encourage PPE compliance, and improve safety culture. On the other hand, it's not working. To properly address hand safety, you need to use both hands to juggle multiple balls.

Show of Hands: Insights and Strategies to Prevent Hand Injuries takes a close look at each of those balls. From gloves to culture to human factors, we'll investigate the ins and outs of various hand safety interventions. Along the way, we'll take a look at the current state of hand safety, including what safety managers believe and the ways in which they're trying to solve the problems of hand injuries.

But first, let's take a look at the damage done by hand incidents, and whose hands are being injured.

THE SCOPE OF HAND INJURIES

If you're reading this guide, it might be because you know that hand injuries are the second-most frequently injured body part[1] requiring workers to miss time from work.

Or it's because you're aware that the median hand injury requires 6 days of lost time,[2] which adds up to a lot of days missed from work.

Maybe it's because you've heard that the **average cost of workers' compensation claims for hand injuries is $26,264,**[3] and that cost can skyrocket when surgery is required.

Perhaps you're reading this guide because you recognize that upwards of 30% of patients who show up at the emergency department are there because of hand injuries or other hand-related trauma.[4]

One last reason you might be reading this guide: you recognize there's an "estimated incidence of 896 hand and wrist injuries per 100,000 persons per year",[5] which means that every year almost 1% of people will hurt their hand or wrist.

That's an almost inconceivable number of hand injuries. And it gets worse.

[1] https://www.bls.gov/iif/nonfatal-injuries-and-illnesses-tables.htm#cd
[2] https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/industry-incidence-rates/work-injuries-and-illnesses-by-part-of-body/
[3] https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/costs/workers-compensation-costs/
[4] https://www.amazon.com/Injuries-Emergency-Department-Peter-Houpt/dp/1032322438
[5] https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0735675721006999

THE SCOPE OF HAND INJURIES

In addition to the initial lost time due to injury, there's an all-too-frequent long-term cost to hand incidents. One study found that 58.5% of patients visiting the emergency department for hand injuries had "residual functional impairment."[6] In other words, their hands didn't function quite the same as they had before the injury.

The knock-on effects of reduced hand function include having to train the injured person on a new job, plus having to hire and train the injured person's replacement. Not to mention lost productivity costs while that person is being brought up to speed, the detrimental effects on morale and other lengthy effects of the trauma.

No matter the initial reason for reading this guide, **hand injuries happen frequently. They can be financially expensive. And they can alter the course of a person's life forever.** You can sum all of this up in six words: hand injuries are a serious problem.

But they are also preventable.

[6] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10089049/

WHOSE HANDS ARE INJURED?

Hand injuries happen to everyone.

Younger workers tend to injure their hands more frequently than they do other body types, but hand injuries are still clearly a danger at any age.

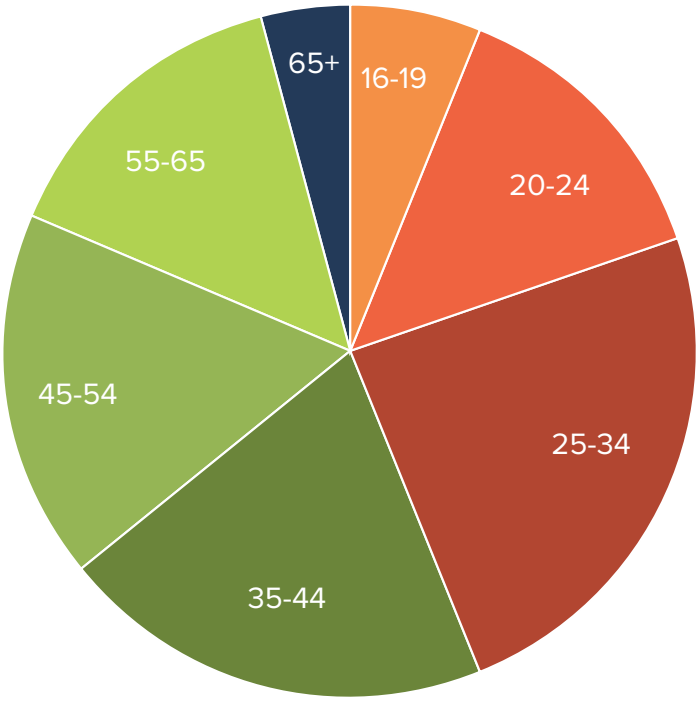
And it affects people in every industry. According to one glove manufacturer, “hand injuries are the number one preventable industrial accident in manufacturing, construction, oil and gas, you name it.”[7]

None of this is surprising. And perhaps the least surprising fact about hand injuries? The top three sources of hand injuries are hand tools, machinery, and parts and materials.[8] In other words, tasks and tools that require the use of your hands.

The golden rule of hands in the workplace: when you use them, you run the risk of losing them. Anyone who works with their hands—whether it’s carrying material, operating machinery, or using power tools—is at risk.

This raises a major question for every frontline leader: what are you going to do about it?

Hand Injuries by Age



[7] *Rethinking Hand Safety* by Joe Geng

[8] https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/industry-incidence-rates/work-injuries-and-illnesses-by-part-of-body/

BEFORE YOU READ ANY FURTHER

Many workplaces take the hierarchy of controls seriously. The hierarchy of controls is the bedrock of workplace safety and any specific safety intervention—including hand safety—is built on its foundational principles.

When it comes to hand safety, some workplaces don't have a handle on the hierarchy. They haven't taken the time to ensure the proper administrative controls are in place, or they have left viable engineering solutions unaddressed. (Not to mention PPE, which should be a no-brainer but unfortunately is not always the case.)

If your workplace hasn't attended to the basics of hand safety in accordance with the hierarchy of controls, this guide isn't for you.

Before you read any further, you need to make sure that you've covered the basics, starting with the hierarchy of controls. You don't have to be perfect. But you need to have some measures in place before turning your attention to the initiatives in this guide.

This guide is intended to help identify ways to augment the existing measures you have in place. Because when it comes to hand safety, even companies with robust safety systems must take extra steps to manage human factors and other issues with care.

THE WHAC-A-MOLE APPROACH TO HAND SAFETY

Raise your hand if you've heard this one before: a frontline leader in the workplace recognizes there's a looming safety concern. For our purposes here, let's say they notice there's an uptick in employees who aren't wearing safety gloves.

In response, that frontline leader starts playing Whac-A-Mole, doing their best to quash every violation as soon as it pops up. And soon enough, they find themselves burned out, exhausted from the constant vigilance required. Worst of all, they don't seem to have made a meaningful dent in the problem.

The effort is understandable—if you see a problem then you want to fix it. The challenge is that the solution isn't proportional to the problem. You can't be everywhere, all the time. There's no way to scale an individual response (no matter how heroic that individual may be) to a collective issue.

A worker's hands are at risk every time they use a hand tool. Every time they set down an object. You can't police all of that.

You couldn't look over everyone's shoulder, even if you never slept and devoted every waking moment to trying.

This is especially true when you account for what happens when workers go home for the day—because given the potentially long-term outcomes of a hand injury, incidents that occur at home will absolutely affect the workplace the next day.

You can't run around shoving gloves on hands and reminding workers to pay attention to pinch points and line of fire. You'd get nothing else done and you still wouldn't resolve the problem.

There has to be a better way.

And there *is* a better way. But first, it's important to see the full picture of hand safety interventions in the workplace.

SAFETY PROFESSIONALS' VIEW OF HAND SAFETY:

THE CURRENT STATE OF THINGS

There are many ways to manage the technical, physical and human factors that impact on-the-job hand safety. From job hazard analyses and sourcing better gloves to reviewing incidents and training supervisors to do more safety work, safety folks have plenty of tools available in their toolkits

In a recent survey conducted by SafeStart, with the help of *EHS Today*, over 500 professionals with safety duties—a mix of managers, supervisors, directors and others who are responsible for training, procurement, compliance and more—explained their approach to hand safety.

Three interventions stood out in terms of popularity when it comes to protecting workers' hands. These are the activities that safety folks have most focused their time and attention on. They are:

- Developing a culture that influences PPE compliance
- Conducting audits/walkthroughs/observations
- Conducting training on PPE requirements, use, care

Over a quarter of respondents said they conducted audits, walkthroughs, and/or observations on a daily basis, and the same number said they did so on a weekly basis. Fewer than 3% said they never performed these activities. It all adds up to over half of survey participants saying they spent a significant amount of time or more on audits, walkthroughs and/or observations.

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SAFETY PROFESSIONALS' VIEW OF HAND SAFETY:

THE CURRENT STATE OF THINGS

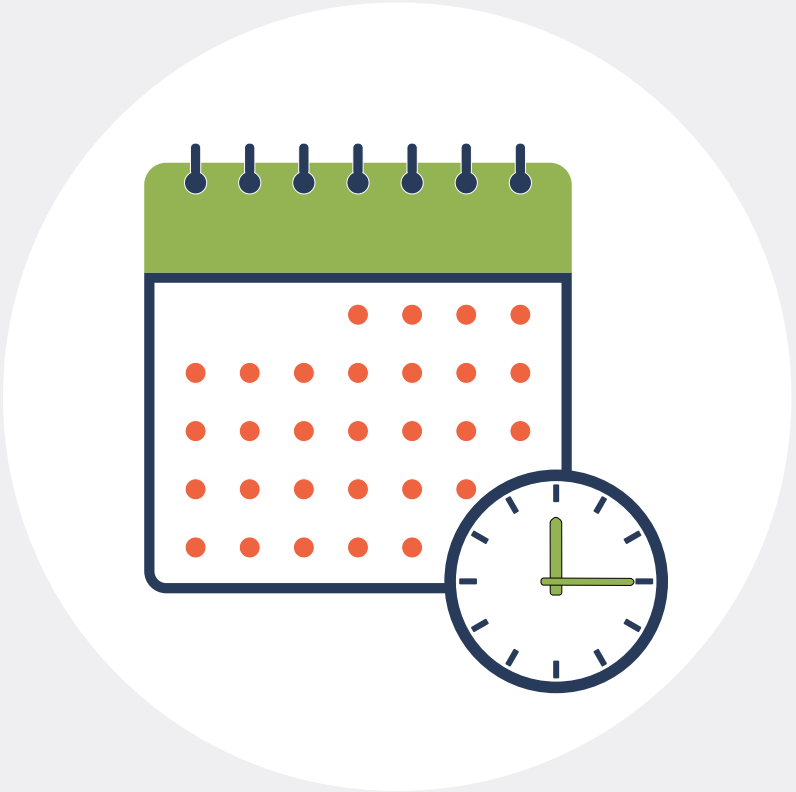
Survey participants also spend their time trying to develop a safety culture and influence PPE compliance with the frequent use of toolbox talks and one-on-one conversations. Over half of respondents said they carried out these activities on a daily or weekly basis, and only 10% and 7.5%, respectively, said they never did them.

On one hand, these are examples of safety professionals walking the talk—they've said that hand safety is important, and now they're lacing up their boots and spending time on the floor. They're talking about hand safety in small groups and individual conversations. Their time is precious and they're spending it monitoring hand safety. That's commitment.

On the other hand, these measures are not as effective as anyone would like.

After all, almost two-thirds of respondents said they observed workers not wearing PPE at least occasionally, if not more frequently.

Something else needs to be done.



SAFETY PROFESSIONALS' VIEW OF HAND SAFETY: BELIEFS

When it comes to what safety professionals think about hand safety, it's no surprise to see that many of their beliefs overlap with their actions.

For example, in the SafeStart survey, respondents ranked audits, walkthroughs and/or observations as the most effective activity or method to reduce hand injuries. And as we've already seen, safety professionals spend a significant amount of their time doing exactly that. One of the big challenges for safety professionals is filling the need for observations without veering into Whac-A-Mole territory. And understandably, many variables determine the efficacy of every well-intentioned observational activity.

Respondents also believe that toolbox talks and one-on-one conversations are important and both happen with regularity. Similarly, training was listed as a particularly effective activity, and almost 97% of survey participants say that they conduct training at least once a year, with over half of them conducting it once a month or more.

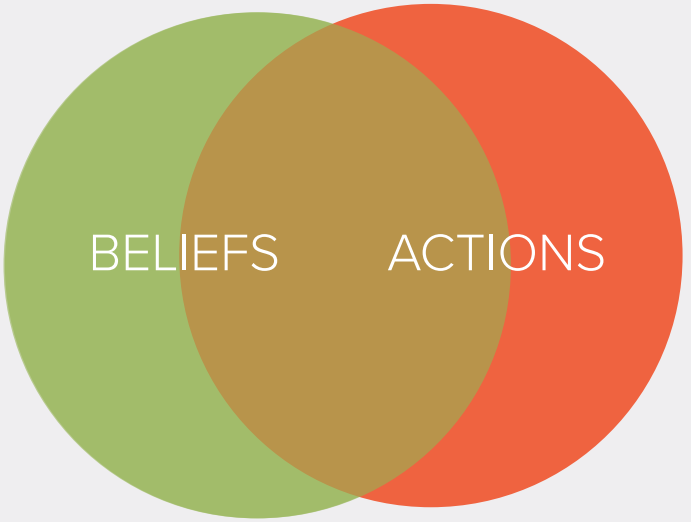
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS' VIEW OF HAND SAFETY: BELIEFS

There's one area where beliefs and actions don't line up. **Respondents believe that reducing distractions is on par with refresher training for its value in preventing hand injuries. Meanwhile, 21% of folks said they never—yes, never—take active steps to reduce distractions.** Even though there was strong agreement that the "chances of line-of-fire hand injuries would be lower if workers were focused on the hazards in relation to their hands."

While we're talking about human factors like distraction, safety folks quite rightly believe that complacency and rushing/multitasking can have a notable impact on safety, with over a third of respondents saying they have a significant effect on glove use. Roughly 75% agreed that these factors have a moderate or greater impact on safety outcomes.

In fact, the survey revealed that safety professionals believe human factors are three of the six biggest influences to workers not wearing required protective gloves.

If we want to answer the question of why walkthroughs, toolbox talks and other interventions aren't having a more positive effect on hand safety, there's a single glaring answer—they aren't accounting for human factors.



Better alignment of beliefs and actions can reduce distractions and prevent hand incidents.

SAFETY PROFESSIONALS' VIEW OF HAND SAFETY:

DISTRACTION AND LINE OF FIRE

The survey also presented safety professionals with a series of statements about hand injuries, and among the statements they most agreed with was: **"Chances of line-of-fire hand injuries would be lower if workers were focused on the hazards in relation to their hands."** Clearly, EHS folks believe there is a close connection between distraction and line of fire. (The only statement that received a more positive response was about the incident-mitigating effects of culture, which we'll get to later in this guide.)

It makes intuitive sense that distraction and line of fire go hand in hand. Paying attention to one's body position, and to what's going on in the surrounding environment, is one of the best ways to stay out of line of fire. (It's also the only universal solution, as no matter what task someone is doing, awareness will drastically influence risk.)

This belief is backed up by research. A study called "The Distracted Worker: Effect on Hazard Recognition and Safety Performance"[9] found that: "distracted workers recognized a smaller proportion of hazards than the undistracted." These results are as important as they are unsurprising.

We've already seen that safety professionals are strong proponents of the need to reduce distractions in the workplace. We've also seen that their actions lag somewhat in that regard. But what if one of the solutions isn't just about reducing distraction—what if it also requires us to reframe the problem?

[9] https://ascelibrary.org/doi/abs/10.1061/9780784481288.036#core-collateral-purchase-access

SAFETY PROFESSIONALS' VIEW OF HAND SAFETY:

DISTRACTION AND LINE OF FIRE

It's important to eliminate distractions as best you can, and it's also impossible to eliminate all of them. Even if you could, the human brain has a tendency to wander in and out of focus. In the same way that people can trip over their own feet even when there are no other obstacles in sight, our minds can drift away from the task at hand even when there's no external source of distraction.

At some point, you may need to shift your efforts away from reducing the causes of distraction, towards improving the attention of workers who are the subject of distraction. There is a two-part formula about attention and safety that is as straightforward as it is true:

When safety awareness is up, distractions are less likely to lead to line-of-fire risks.

When safety awareness is down, it's easier to become distracted and the risk of line-of-fire incidents increases.

An attention-oriented approach can reduce hand injuries. It can also cut down on all sorts of other incidents too. Attention and distraction are two sides of the same coin, and this is why training programs that center on human factors can be so effective at mitigating hand injuries caused by distraction and line of fire. Because they can help protect workers from both external distractions and internal mental lapses.

But before we get too distracted by line-of-fire issues, it's important to remember we're grappling with a complex problem that has no single solution. Let's take a big-picture look at what companies, even those with advanced safety management systems, can do to improve hand safety.

IMPROVING HAND SAFETY

The data is clear: our collective efforts aren't enough to protect workers' hands. More needs to be done. The good news is that five major interventions can lead to more frequent PPE use, fewer distraction-related issues and a more robust hand safety program.

Providing the appropriate glove

When was the last time you reviewed how well your gloves fit your employees' wide-ranging needs?

Managing human factors

Workers' mental and physical states are a massively overlooked contributor to hand injuries. Are you managing these human factors at both individual and organizational levels?

Habits that hold off shortcuts

Strong safety habits can provide an extra layer of protection—if you establish them properly.

A helping hand from supervisors

Are frontline supervisors hurting or helping your hand safety efforts? Learn to turn frontline supervisors into safety champions for fewer hand injuries.

Getting a grip on culture

If you shift the safety culture then you'll shift the safety outcomes—but your focus needs to be in the right place.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

PROVIDING THE APPROPRIATE GLOVE

The right glove for the right job. It's a core principle of the hierarchy of controls and it's also the foundation for determining what workers need to wear on their hands at any given time.

Determining the right glove for the right job begins by identifying the hazards that are present and the tasks workers will be completing. Then consider what type of glove will offer protection without unduly limiting their dexterity. These calculations should include factors such as the type and duration of potential contact with material or hazards, grip requirements and how much of the body needs to be protected.

After all that, there's still the matter of getting workers to wear PPE. Keep in mind:

SIZE AND COMFORT	Gloves need to fit workers properly and feel comfortable to wear.
DEXTERITY	Workers need to feel like gloves aren't compromising their ability to do their work.
STYLE	Like it or not, how PPE looks can influence its rate of use.
ACCESS	The harder gloves are to access—based on location or administrative difficulty—the less they'll be used.
REPLACEMENT	How easy is it for workers to replace worn or damaged gloves? It matters!

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

PROVIDING THE APPROPRIATE GLOVE

It's an unavoidable fact that sometimes workers will take their gloves off for any number of reasons: a task that requires dexterity, heat, sweat, complacency, or fatigue. And some tasks and equipment require workers to forgo gloves for safety reasons.

Additionally, hand injuries can still occur with gloves on—83% of survey participants identified at least one of nine types of hand injuries occurred despite the fact that workers were wearing gloves.

All of this demonstrates that PPE is only one part of the hand-safety puzzle. A robust hand safety program starts with gloves, but must also include additional elements, especially safety habits, workplace culture and, perhaps most importantly, human factors management.

83%

OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED HAND INJURIES OCCURRED WITH GLOVES ON.

Improving PPE compliance can be a surprisingly complex undertaking. A free guide examines the hidden gaps in many PPE programs, the shared responsibilities in the use of protective equipment, and more. **Read it now at safestart.com/PPE**

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

MANAGING HUMAN FACTORS

We've already seen that safety professionals believe that human factors have a noticeable impact on hand safety. There's evidence to back them up.

One study looked at people showing up at an emergency department with a hand injury. It found that "the dominant hand was involved in 48 (50%) of the cases."[10] This means, of course, that the non-dominant hand was involved in the other half of the incidents. The study doesn't specify the primary causes of the incidents, but the most logical suspect for non-dominant hand injuries is when the hand is left in the line of fire.

This is backed up by the National Safety Council's *Injury Facts*, which says that the top two sources of injury for fingers are machinery and hand tools. And the top two sources of injury for the rest of the hand? You guessed it: machinery and hand tools.

These are tools and equipment that people tend to have control over. They are objects that people use frequently, day after day, week after week. Which makes them a breeding ground for complacency and distraction.

[10] https://ascelibrary.org/doi/abs/10.1061/9780784481288.036#core-collateral-purchase-access

WHAT YOU CAN DO:
MANAGING HUMAN FACTORS

If you want to get serious about hand injuries, you need to get serious about human factors. We've already seen how distraction and complacency can lead to line-of-fire injuries. Fatigue and forgetfulness can cause employees to forgo PPE. Rushing and overconfidence can result in workers placing their hands in pinch points. Let's face it: human factors have a hand in a huge number of hand injuries.

The obvious solution has two components. The first is to conduct human factors training so that frontline workers can recognize and respond to human factors in real time. That way, they can recognize when they're more prone to distraction and will know what they can do about it. The end result? Better attention and safer hands.

The second is to embed human factors management principles into your safety management system. That will allow everyone in your organization—from safety to operations to senior leaders—to see workplace systems, processes and interventions through a human factors lens. It makes it easier to identify and correct otherwise hidden causes of incidents and allows you to more capably sustain the momentum created by human factors training.

Incidentally, it also gives supervisors and safety folks a hand in supporting habit development, which is another key part of reducing hand injuries.

Part of managing human factors is helping workers deal with specific physical and mental states, like when they become distracted or fatigued. But human factors management goes well beyond the individual level and includes recognizing how organizational systems and processes influence people's actions.

You can learn more about the structural components of human factors management at safestart.com/guides/hff-white-paper

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

HABITS THAT HOLD OFF SHORTCUTS

What do safety gloves and habits have in common?

They both act as a last line of defense when other measures have failed.

In fact, you can think of habits as an additional layer of protection for safety gloves, because they can help counteract the forgetfulness that can prevent employees from wearing PPE. Habits can also stop employees from being influenced by human factors to take safety shortcuts that might circumvent measures meant to protect their hands (not to mention the rest of their bodies).

When employees become distracted, their brain goes on autopilot and does whatever it's used to. Are employees in the habit of wearing their gloves? If so then they'll likely put them on even when they're distracted or complacent—which is great news, because that's when they'll need them most.

And if workers aren't in the habit of wearing PPE then they're in double trouble, as they won't be able to rely on the protective measures of PPE even as their risk of an incident has increased thanks to human factors.

The science of building habits is a constantly evolving field of study. Plenty of myths are out there, from habits only taking 21 days to form (sometimes that's the case but often it takes longer) to habits becoming permanent once they're established (the good news is that bad habits can be broken, the bad news is that good habits need regular reinforcement).

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

HABITS THAT HOLD OFF SHORTCUTS

Fortunately, several well-established facts can give you a helping hand in building better habits when it comes to gloves and hand safety:

It takes time. According to Tim Page-Bottorff, CSP, the author of "The Habit of Safety: Forming, Changing and Reinforcing Key Safety Behaviors", you need a dedicated approach to habit building. He says, "With the average person needing just under 10 weeks to develop a new habit—and a sizeable minority of employees requiring longer—no single graphic video or shocking story will have a consistent impact on their behavior for the length of time required to establish a new routine." Instead of impact, target consistency because it takes time and repetition to build safety habits.

Positivity matters. Page-Bottorff also notes that establishing long-term habits requires a positive approach: "Negative communications, from injury-based scare tactics to old-school yelling, might correct behavior in the moment, but the effect will wear off well before a new habit is formed. Positive thinking has been demonstrated to increase people's ability to build personal skills and supervisors who take an approach based on encouragement and support will likely promote better habit formation."

Group effort = group success. In the habit-building guide called How to Make Habits Stick, it's evident that shared goals can contribute to a sense of accountability, build group momentum, and, ultimately, lead to better habit adoption. Try establishing hand safety habits as a team rather than individually.

The articles and guide mentioned here offer a wealth of insights into building better safety habits. You can read them and other great resources at safestart.com/habits

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

A HELPING HAND FROM SUPERVISORS

In the SafeStart survey, respondents outlined the top four activities they think are most effective at reducing the frequency of hand injuries. They are:

- One-on-one conversations
- Audits/walkthroughs/observations
- Training
- Toolbox talks/pre-shift meetings

What do these four measures have in common? Frontline supervisors have a hand in all of them.

Unfortunately, supervisors don't often seem to be doing a particularly good job of supporting safety, as the same survey found that they are the group that could most improve at managing daily hand safety, beating out organizational leaders, safety culture, and even individual employees themselves.

Supervisors can be effective advocates for hand safety. But first, they need three key things: a strong set of safety and human factors knowledge, communication skills, and the trust of employees.

Turning supervisors into safety champions can be a major undertaking. But it's well worth the effort, and there are many quick wins that can result in remarkable improvements.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

A HELPING HAND FROM SUPERVISORS

Here is a collection of the best resources for both immediate gains and long-term transformations in your supervisory safety abilities:

The Safety-First Supervisor

There are six common ways that supervisors influence safety—and they can make or break your company's safety efforts. This guide explores the skills, knowledge and techniques that supervisors need to effectively manage the safety of their crew.

Safety and the Supervisor: Developing Frontline Leadership Skills to Improve Safety

This webinar by Chris Ross, CSP, CPLP, gives EHS managers and company executives practical insights into how they can make targeted improvements to their supervisors' safety capabilities.

7 Essential Soft Skills For Hard Workplace Safety Problems

This guide takes a look at the transformative interpersonal skills and techniques that turn engagement tactics from mediocre to magnificent, and allow supervisors to establish more trust with workers.

SafeLead Skills for Supervisors

When you need to step beyond free resources, this top-notch program is designed specifically to address gaps in frontline leadership by providing new perspectives on human factors, safety conversations and how to lead by example.

Access these resources and more at safestart.com/supervisors.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

GETTING A GRIP ON CULTURE

Safety culture has a sizeable influence on hand safety. Safety professionals were presented with seven different statements about hand safety, covering common topics like PPE and line of fire and supervisors. Out of all of them, the statement they agreed with most was: “A strong safety culture can offset physical/human factors that cause hand injuries.”

Above all else, the one thing that everyone agrees on is that safety culture matters. You can see it in your own workplace too. Ask yourself a couple of questions:

- You provide gloves but is there a culture of wearing them?
- You have supervisors but are they actively supporting hand safety culture?
- Workers know about human factors but is there a culture of responding to them?
- Workers know about habits but is there a culture that reinforces them until they stick?

Culture change is a major undertaking. It can be difficult, long-term work. It is also an essential component of hand safety.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

GETTING A GRIP ON CULTURE

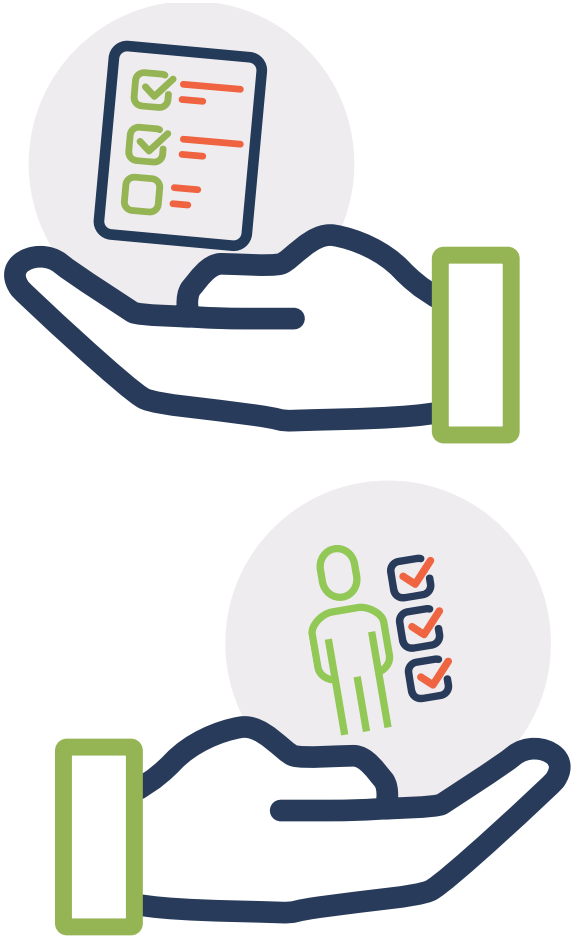
Culture is an organization-wide issue. Many people think it's a leadership-only item, and yes, it starts and ends with leadership. However, a great deal of workplace culture is determined by the patterns of thought and behaviors of workers themselves in response to leadership. It starts at the top and moves down the organization to the bottom, where it once again emerges and returns to the top. It's a never-ending loop. This is why culture can be so hard to shift—and why it can be so powerful once it does.

In fact, safety culture change is such a challenging endeavor that it's best not to try to change it directly. Instead, you should focus on safety climate, which, as SafeStart's Pandora Bryce, PhD says, "is how [employees] feel about safety right now. One can think of it as the organization's current mood about safety." If safety culture is like an entire forest, then safety climate is each individual tree.

You can't plant or cut down a forest overnight. But you can plant a couple of seedlings every day. Or, if your safety climate is sliding in the opposite direction, then you can think of it as cutting down a few trees every day. It may not feel like much from one day to the next. But over time, you'll start to recognize whether the culture forest is growing or shrinking.

The message here is to focus on what you can control: setting a consistently positive tone, communicating openly with your team, showing a personal commitment to hand safety and upholding hand safety expectations fairly and without blame. Do these things long enough and you'll see the culture start to change—and better hand safety outcomes won't be far behind.

Pandora Bryce has conducted extensive research into how safety climate works. Discover her insights, including the relationship between today's safety climate and tomorrow's safety culture, and how you can spark improvements throughout your organization, in her white paper **Six Leadership Skills For Improving Safety Climate at safestart.com/guides/safety-climate-white-paper**



BETTER HAND SAFETY IS WITHIN REACH

(OTHER SAFETY GAINS ARE TOO)

Protecting workers' hands requires safety professionals to be ambidextrous. They need to manage compliance requirements with one hand while handling human factors with the other hand. They need to stay up to date with safety gloves while also influencing the safety climate. Supporting better safety habits while also mentoring more supportive supervisors.

It's a lot.

These might look like a series of disparate issues and interventions, but they're actually all part of the same problem. Human factors are ever-present, turnover happens, and ongoing vigilance is required. One-and-done training and interventions simply won't cut it. But human factors training, better habits, stronger supervisor skills and a focus on safety climate can help you maintain long-term success with less effort than you might think.

BETTER HAND SAFETY IS WITHIN REACH

(OTHER SAFETY GAINS ARE TOO)

Fortunately, there are compounding effects and efficiencies associated with these hand safety solutions. Human factors apply to all types of activities, so learning to manage them improves a range of safety outcomes. When people learn how to stay out of the line of fire it applies not only to their hands but the rest of their bodies in a wide variety of settings, including:

- Eye injuries (flying debris, chemical exposures)
- Foot injuries (stepped on, crushed under)
- Burns, cuts, contusions, fractures (anywhere on the body)
- Pinch point or caught between injuries (tools, equipment, material)
- Forklift collisions (with people or objects)
- Dropped tools (from heights)

It takes time to build a great culture, but that means that once you shift a safety culture it can be resilient and maintained in the face of any day-to-day challenges. And once you embed human factors management principles in your safety management system, you'll have set yourself up for long-term success.

Workers don't avoid hand injuries by accident. Good safety outcomes require a dedicated commitment to reach beyond compliance. The benefits of doing so can be widespread and long-lasting.

How safe will your employees' hands be tomorrow, next week, next year? The answer to that question is in your hands.

We hope that you'll keep this guide handy.

For more insight into a variety of safety problems—and their potential solutions—check out our collection of on-demand webinars
safestart.com/webinars

About SafeStart

For over 25 years, SafeStart has been serving clients with solutions to increase personal safety awareness and skills. During this time we have become leaders in human factors management. We've helped thousands of companies, large and small, reduce injuries, increase engagement and achieve sustainable culture improvement.

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