The best tools we all have is our hands. Every job in PPD requires you to use them. Can you imagine any occupation that does not require you to use your hands? Hands are so important because of their utility. They provide us with the dexterity needed to perform most daily activities. The following safety talk will cover some of the hazards our hands are exposed to at work and how to protect them.

While at work, your hands are exposed to three general kinds of hazards:

- **Irritating substances** - skin conditions such as dermatitis can be caused by contact with chemicals and biological agents (bacteria, fungi, and viruses). Chemicals and toxic substances can also enter the bloodstream through abrasions or cuts.
- **Mechanical hazards** - are present wherever tools and machinery are used. Injuries resulting from tool and machinery use might include cuts, punctures, abrasions, or crushing.
- **Environmental hazards** - factors like extreme heat or cold can cause hand and finger injury.

One of the primary methods to protect your hands is by wearing gloves. There are a number of different types of gloves and selecting the correct type is key to protecting your hands:

- Chemical resistant gloves (butyl rubber, natural rubber latex, neoprene, thick plastic) protect against corrosive and irritating chemicals like pesticides, acids, cleansers, or solvents. No one type of chemical resistant glove can protect you from ALL chemicals.
- Leather gloves protect against sparks, moderate heat, blows, chips, and rough objects.
- Fabric gloves can protect against dirt, slivers, chafing, and abrasion. These gloves do not provide sufficient protection to be used with rough, sharp, or heavy materials.
- Coated fabric gloves are useful for general-purpose hand protection and offer slip resistant qualities.
When should I not wear gloves!

- **NEVER** wear gloves around moving equipment/parts where the glove could get snagged and pull you into the machinery
- Examples include drive shafts, mills, drill presses, lathes and grinders

Chemical Exposure:
When handling chemicals, most of the exposure is through your hands and forearms or your lungs. To protect yourself from contact exposure, the container label and the MSDS/SDS for a particular chemical are the best sources of information for proper personal protective equipment (PPE) for your hands.

Chemical exposure hazards and PPE requirements differ greatly depending upon the form of the material (dry, water based, non water-based, or gaseous) of chemical being used. In order to protect your hands from injury, you will need to precisely follow the label instructions about the type of gloves or other hand protection for each different chemical you use.

BY THE NUMBERS:
- **80%** of all occupation injuries involve the hands
- **110,000** lost time injuries annually
- **60%** of hand injuries could be prevented by wearing the correct gloves
Review / Discussion Questions:

1. Do you ever wear gloves for your job at Colby? What type, and do you feel that these protect you from the hazard?
2. If you were working with both sharp objects and a chemical at the same time, what would you wear to protect your hands?
3. Should you wear gloves when sharpening mower blades at a bench grinder? Why or why not?

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Questions, concerns or comments contact the EHS Director at extension 5504.