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# ENGINEERING ADVANCES THAT **BENEFIT THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

Thanks to stringent workplace health and safety (WHS) legislation globally and adherence to safe work practices, instances of workplace injury are trending downward. However, the construction industry is still susceptible to elevated rates when compared with other sectors.

The nature of the work carried out presents a range of hazards that demand suitably engineered protective solutions to minimise injury risk and the loss in productivity that results from time off work.



## THE NUMBERS

**Accidents and injury represent a significant cost to businesses globally.** According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data<sup>1</sup>, 87% of reported work-related illness and injury cases in the 2017-18 period involved employees, with 76% of that number (372,300 individuals) accessing paid leave entitlements. In fact, 60% of total cases overall required time off work for recovery or rehabilitation.

The construction sector is overrepresented, with 59 reported injury or illness cases per 1000 employed persons<sup>2</sup> – the highest of any industry.

The most common type of hand injury is cuts. Abrasions, impact/crush and strain/fatigue injuries are also common.

Cut injuries were seen to be most common in manufacturing, construction/demolition and food and beverage. All three groups cited over 70% chance of cut injuries occurring<sup>4</sup>.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics – Work related injuries Jul 2017-June 2018
2. Ibid.
3. Eurostat – Accidents at work – statistics by economic activity.
4. Ansell Hand and Safety Report 2017.





## THE INJURIES

In Australia, serious worker compensation claims<sup>5</sup> are consistently due to three main injury types:

1. Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury [41%]
2. Wounds, lacerations, amputations, and internal organ damage [16%]
3. Musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases [14%]

Within the construction sector, occupations most at risk are labourers, machinery operators and drivers, and technicians and trades workers, with injury to hands and upper limbs accounting for nearly one quarter of all reported cases<sup>7</sup>.

## PREVENTION & PROTECTION

A safety risk management program should identify hazards, assess the risks associated with those hazards and implement the most effective control measures to minimise the likelihood of injury.

This includes provision of suitable personal protective equipment (PPE). In hazardous industries like construction, work practices and procedures should be designed with the specific aim of avoiding the following common injury types.

5. Safe Work Australia - Work-related injury and disease - Key WHS statistics Australia 2019.

6. Eurostat - Health and Safety at Work in Europe - p.8.

7. Safe Work Australia - Work-related injury and disease - Key WHS statistics Australia 2019.

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**A safety risk management program should identify hazards**





## MUSCULOSKELETAL INJURY

Musculoskeletal injury includes joint, ligament, muscle, and tendon damage so steps should be taken to prevent awkward hand and body postures, prolonged or repetitive movement, unnecessary force, and heavy lifting and carrying. It also means ensuring that work surfaces are positioned at a suitable height.

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**Musculoskeletal injury often related to awkward hand and body postures, prolonged or repetitive movement, unnecessary force, and heavy lifting and carrying.**

Where PPE must be worn, it should be of a type and design that specifically addresses the present risks.

Support of musculoskeletal health requires a solution specifically designed to minimise hand fatigue. Ansell's ERGOFORM™ technology enables glove design with an ergonomic fit that maximises range of motion and eases stress that leads to injuries. Developed by measuring the toll of occupational activities and applying cutting edge technology, Ansell's ERGOFORM™ solutions offer improved dexterity, comfort and fit when compared with competitors' offerings and even bare hands.



## CUTS, WOUNDS & LACERATIONS

Prevention of cut injury requires adequate hazard identification and the implementation of suitable risk management processes.

Employees should receive adequate training in the use of mechanical equipment, as well as prescribed safe handling methods. Powered equipment should be regularly checked to ensure guards are in place and functioning properly and sharp edges should be covered.

Appropriate PPE should be issued, along with instruction on its correct use. Hand protection solutions should be of a type and design that adequately defends against cut injury.

Ansell's INTERCEPT™ cut resistance technology blends engineered, synthetic and natural fibres to form a high-performance yarn, delivering the highest levels of cut protection with exceptional comfort and dexterity.

# SPECIALIST ENGINEERING DELIVERS FIT-FOR-PURPOSE PROTECTION

**A glove that is uncomfortable or interferes with the ability to carry out tasks is the most common reason for removal of hand protection<sup>8</sup>, so fit and comfort should always factor in the decision-making process. Workers should never have to choose between performance and protection.** Ensuring that PPE is suited to the task mitigates that unwanted decision and should therefore be the main goal.

Leather gloves enjoy ongoing popularity within the construction industry because of commonly held misconceptions including durability, cut resistance, comfort & fit as well as being water repellent. However, opting for general purpose rigger gloves and applying a one-size fits all approach ignores significant technology innovations that deliver better products and improved safety.

Material and fibre engineering techniques and specialised knitting technologies such as Ansell's INTERCEPT™ Cut Resistance Technology continue to advance, enabling the design and production of industry- and occupation-specific solutions that provide high cut protection with exceptional comfort and dexterity, meeting the needs of the most demanding applications.

Coating technology advances have delivered more enduring products, making them a better long-term choice with a lower cost-per-wear than cheaper alternatives.

In industry sectors like construction where complete removal of risk is an unattainable goal, PPE is a vital safety system component. For safety and operations managers serious about mitigating risk, selecting gloves that have been developed using specialist engineering will not only deliver the optimal safeguard against avoidable accidents and injury, but importantly signal a genuine commitment to the safety and wellbeing of staff.

8. 2017 Hand Safety Report - Ansell - Reasons for not using hand protection, p 17.

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**A glove that is uncomfortable or interferes with the ability to carry out tasks is the most common reason for removal of hand protection.**





# Blackwoods

We are truly committed to being the chosen partner for the supply of industrial and safety products and solutions to support Australian industries.

In living this commitment, we will demonstrate our:

## Proven experience and expertise

Our history of over 140 years in successfully delivering solutions for industry.

## True competitive drive

With a strong heritage in Industrial supply we want to ensure this is protected by ensuring we remain genuinely competitive across products, solutions, service and innovation.

## Partnership commitment

We partner with selected suppliers so you can be confident we will deliver the best solutions for both your business and your industry applications.