

# Tools For Life - Weekly Safety Meeting



## Home Safe Home Healthy

March 2021

### Let's not get out of Hand – Hand Safety in the Workplace

Hands are among worker's most valuable tools, used for everything from threading pipe to using an impact drill for material install. In the last 7 years, hand injuries have accounted for over 30% of injuries at Apollo and according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, they account for over 1 million emergency room visits from work injuries a year (BLS 2018).

The three most common types of hand injuries in construction are Lacerations, Crushes, and Avulsion Fractures or Detachments.

**LACERATIONS:** While most lacerations are relatively easily treated, they run a high risk of nerve or tendon damage when the cuts become deep enough. These injuries can leave permanent impairment and affect a person for the entirety of his or her career.

**CRUSHES:** Crushes occur when the hand is caught between heavy equipment, machinery, or material and another hard surface. At Apollo Mechanical our shop environments create a unique hazard for hand injuries when dealing with fabrication machinery.

**AVULSION FRACTURES/DETACHMENTS:** Avulsion injuries are more commonly known by the example of a wedding ring or other piece of jewelry that pulls muscle and tendons away from the bone, stripping the finger bare. These injuries can be avoided by removing such jewelry or replacing them with a silicon ring instead. Detachment injuries are when the finger itself gets detached from the rest of the hand and generally result in the loss of a partial or entire digit.

#### How to Avoid Hand Injuries:

- Stay focused on the process or task
- Be educated – Know the equipment being used- PPE you are using- Work environment you are in
- Do not bypass or disregard safety procedures or guards
- Select the correct glove (cut rating) for the task being performed
- Communicate with fellow teammates that may be helping you lift or set material
- Body positioning can often help negate injuries by maintaining control and or being in a better position to react if needed.

#### What PPE should I select:

- For material handling, select a minimum of ANSI cut 4 rated gloves
- For duct or metal fabrication with possible sharp edges select a minimum of an ANSI cut 6 rated gloves
- For welding/grinding select a leather glove with optional cut resistant rating
- For chemical handling select a butyl or Nitrile glove (refer to the product SDS)
- For some fabrication machines gloves create a hazard rather than protect the hands. Know which ones do not require gloves as PPE.