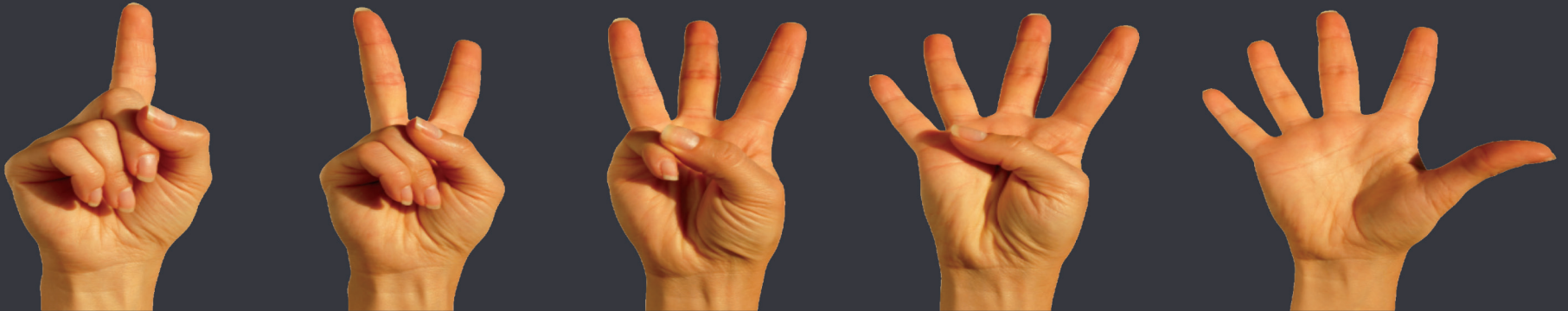


Take Five for Finger and Hand Safety!

FACT: The most injured body parts in the industrial minerals industry are fingers and hands.

Put another way, if you get injured at work, more than likely, it will be an injury to your fingers and hands.



1 PREPARE FOR THE JOB AT HAND AND UNDERSTAND THE RISKS!

- a) Slow down and think. What are the risks? Where is the danger? Do I have the proper tools and protective equipment?
- b) Ask for directions if you are new to a job, or if you are unsure about something. A new job means new hazards.
- c) Ask for help with things that are too heavy or difficult for two hands.
- d) Take the time to go and get the right tool.
- e) Check materials and equipment for rough or sharp edges before handling.
- f) Make sure guards are in place. Never remove or modify a guard.
- g) Maintain a barrier between hands and hazards by using tools or other aids.
- h) Follow proper lock-out/tag-out procedures, and don't forget about stored energy such as heavy objects that can roll.
- i) Remove rings and bracelets.
- j) Exercise good housekeeping, and don't forget the floor. Many finger and hand injuries are the result of slips and falls.

2 PAY ATTENTION!

- a) Keep hands and fingers out of the danger zone.
- b) Keep your eyes on the task and pay attention to the location of your hands, including your non-dominant hand.
- c) Do not position your hands where they can be cut, punctured, burned by heat or chemicals, pinched or struck.
- d) When applying force, such as pushing or pulling, be prepared for unexpected slips or releases.
- e) Stop working if someone or something distracts you.
- f) Do not distract others who are working. Wait until they are done.
- g) Be mindful of pinch points when closing doors.

3 DEVELOP GOOD HABITS!

- a) Maintain a relaxed or neutral position in your wrist. You lose 25% of your grip strength with a bent wrist.
- b) Never rely on strength to perform a job. If you find yourself relying on strength, you likely are using the wrong tool.
- c) Do not reach over equipment while it is running.
- d) Never disable safety interlocks.
- e) Maintain good footing and balance at all times.
- f) Make sure work areas are well lighted.
- g) Never place hands under a suspended load.
- h) Use clamps and vices to secure work pieces when possible.
- i) Don't try to catch heavy objects once they begin to fall.

4 DRESS YOUR HANDS FOR THE JOB!

- a) Gloves are an important method of preventing finger and hand injury. They protect from cuts, abrasions, heat, cold and chemical contact.
- b) Be certain the glove you wear is designed to protect against the hazard.
- c) Wear the proper size glove. Gloves that are too big or too small can cause injury.
- d) Inspect gloves for damage or excessive wear prior to use.
- e) Gloves are not nearly as effective in your pocket as they are on your hands.

5 REMEMBER THAT TOOLS CAN BITE!

- a) Use the proper tool for the job. For instance, don't use a screw driver for a chisel or a knife as a screwdriver.
- b) Direct knives, saw blades and other tools away from yourself and other employees.
- c) Hand Tools
 - i. Ensure that hand tools are in good condition and well-maintained.
 - ii. Do not use hand tools with loose parts, such as a loose hammer head.
 - iii. Do not use tools with damaged, splintered or cracked handles.
 - iv. Do not use chisels, or wedges with mushroomed heads.
 - v. Keep knives and scissors sharpened. Dull tools create hazards.
 - vi. Avoid form-fitting handles. Chances are they are not made for "your" form.
 - vii. Make sure wrenches fit the bolt or other work piece perfectly. If not, the wrench can slip and cause injury.
- d) Power Tools
 - i. Make sure electrical tools are properly insulated and grounded.
 - ii. Disconnect power tools prior to changing components or when not in use.
 - iii. Do not carry tools by the cord and do not yank cords to unplug them.
 - iv. Keep cords away from sharp edges or heat.
 - v. Replace damaged cords. Do not attempt repairs with electrical tape.
 - vi. Tag-out all damaged power tools.
 - vii. Never modify a power tool.
 - viii. Power tools should be double insulated or have a three-prong plug. Do not use adaptors to accommodate two-hole receptacles.
 - ix. Do not use power tools in wet locations.
 - x. Avoid accidental starts and do not place fingers on switches while carrying plugged-in tools.
 - xi. Operate power tools according to the manufacturers' instructions.



What are fingers and hands good for anyway? Touching a loved one, shaking the hand of a new friend, scratching an itch, using the ATM, tying your shoes, catching a ball, petting your dog, driving a car...you get the picture. **Try doing without them!**