Inspect Gloves Regularly

Sometimes all that stands between you and an injury is your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - your last line of defense. Take your gloves, for instance. No matter how carefully you work, there may come a day when you slip up. Your gloves might be the only thing saving you from a serious cut or electric shock.

That's why it makes sense to take good care of your PPE.

You need to get training in how to select and use PPE, like gloves, correctly. You should inspect them for signs of wear and damage. And you should maintain PPE according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Here are some suggestions about checking for damage and defects in your gloves:

- Visual inspections before and after each use can identify many defects.
- Rubber gloves can be filled with water or air on occasion to see if they leak.
- Washable fabric gloves can be turned inside out, so internal defects can be seen easily.
- Metal mesh gloves can be inspected to see if the protective mesh is still intact.
- Gloves used for chemicals can be inspected as they are washed and decontaminated after each use.
- Any gloves you find that have defects should be immediately repaired or discarded.
- Some gloves are meant for one use only. Discard them correctly.

Your safety training program will tell you what kind of gloves to be using for various hazards. Sometimes it is extremely important to use gloves made of the right material, as in the case of chemicals which will permeate one kind of material and not another. Besides gloves, you may also need protective gear to cover your arms, or barrier creams to put directly on your skin.

Learn how to select the right glove for the right job. Know how to care for them. Ask questions if you don't understand.

Regular inspections of PPE of all types prevents needless injuries and deaths each year. PPE needs to be taken care of properly and checked out often for defects from wear and tear. Cleaning, inspecting, repairing and finally discarding gloves that are unfit for further use are important to your safety on the job.

*It doesn't matter if you're a carpenter, a bricklayer, a driver, an electrician or a chemical worker. Your gloves are for your safety.*

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Discard defective gloves.