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Reducing hand injuries in the glass industry — get a grip

Cuts to the hands and arms are one of the major issues when it comes to managing health and safety in the glass and glazing sector. Glass, glazing units and sharp and/or rough edges associated with sealed PVC and timber frames are just a taste of the common hazards that can cause a range of injuries from a small nick through to a severed artery.

And with an estimated 27,000 people working in the glass industry there are 54,000 hands and arms that need protecting from the threat of cuts every working day.

According to Donald Gillespie, International Marketing Manager of Hand and Arm Protection expert, Marigold Industrial®, the use of the latest glove manufacturing technology, combined with high-tech fibres is bringing real benefits to those responsible for health and safety by combining high level cut resistance with dexterity, grip and comfort.



Working with glass has always been and is likely to always remain a hazardous occupation by the very nature of the materials being handled and worked with. For fabricators and installers their relationship with glass and sealed units is very much a close and hands on one.

The vast majority of those working in the glass industry will be all too familiar with the risks associated with glass and the potential outcomes should something go wrong. The reality is that even for the most skilled and experienced, it takes just a moments loss of concentration, a fall or stumble when working on site or in the workshop or a lack of grip allowing glass or a unit to slip through the hands for a potentially very serious injury to occur.

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For those who fail to protect themselves the costs can be severe. For the employee, it is not only dealing with the pain of the injury, but also facing time off work and in severe cases, long term medical treatment and the impact this can have on home life.

For the employer they will not only be faced with the loss of a skilled worker but also face the prospect of increased management time in dealing with the injury and its aftermath, which in today's litigious climate can be significant, given the increasing speed at which employees are taking legal action against their employers over accidents at work.

Given the nature of the work, creating a hazard-free environment, whilst the ultimate goal, is unlikely to ever be achieved. So it is about arming workers with cut resistant gloves and sleeves so that the risk of a major injury, should something go wrong, is significantly minimised. There is no doubt that prevention is a far better solution than cure.

One of the challenges for PPE manufacturers has been to make cut resistant gloves and sleeves that not only offer the right levels of protection but that allow workers to get on with their job unhindered, providing comfort and in the case of gloves also dexterity.

Even five years ago, this was challenging, as to provide high level cut protection usually meant using a thicker gauge cut resistant fibre or glove material, which in turn made the glove thicker and as a result impacted upon dexterity. For general lifting and carrying these thicker gloves could suffice, but for any more detailed jobs, they became impossible to work with, with the potential for people to take them off to complete the detail work, effectively working unprotected.

But as fibre technology has moved on, so too has leading glove manufacturers abilities to meet all of the requirements where protection, grip, comfort and dexterity is concerned – from lifting and carrying to more detailed work.

An example of how manufacturers are using the latest cut resistant fibres and combining this with their own glove manufacturing expertise can be seen through our new PU1000 glove.



Love your hands, we do™



The glove is manufactured using the cut resistant Dyneema® fibre which is 15 times stronger than steel. It is then combined with Marigold Industrial's unique multi fibre Techcor® knitting technology, Polyester and Polyamide-Lycra®.



The result is a glove that not only provides Level 5 cut resistance but which is also highly flexible, is tight fitting and comfortable and with the polyurethane coating on the palm and fingers also providing excellent grip.

It is the focus on fibre technology and improved manufacturing techniques that is allowing glove manufacturers to arm employers with the type of cut resistance – both in terms of gloves and sleeves – that can not only provide them with the protection levels they require against cut hazards, but which staff are far more likely to want to wear as they are comfortable, flexible and most importantly, do not get in the way of the job in hand.

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