Lacerations - Everyone is at Risk

The threat of cuts and lacerations is great throughout a plant. Contact with sharp objects and activities such as manual materials handling, grinding, buffing, and sandblasting create common hazards in a variety of industries and across job classifications.

At a leading picture tube manufacturing plant, for instance, the risk of serious laceration is greatest for workers who handle and inspect glass CRT tubes, which are under vacuum pressure and can implode in a worker's hand. "We are using Kevlar gloves and arm guards to protect workers against lacerations," says Ralph Butler, safety specialist for the picture tube manufacturer. "We require any employee who handles picture tubes to wear these PPE devices."

As Butler points out, glass is not the only concern at the plant: "We also have thin metal parts that are on the inside of the picture tube that are razor sharp. With the help of Kevlar gloves and arm guards, our workers are protected from this danger as well."

Naturally, hands are at the greatest risk for laceration. In 1993, for instance there were more than 130,000 hand lacerations, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

OSHA's hand protection regulation (C.F.R. 1910.138) spells out exactly what employers are required to provide workers. "Employers shall select and require employees to use appropriate hand protection when employees' hands are exposed to hazards such as those from skin absorption of harmful substances; severe cuts or lacerations; severe abrasions; punctures; chemical burns; thermal burns; and harmful temperature extremes."[1] For example, foundry workers generally must wear gloves that provide thermal protection, while meat cutters must wear gloves that protect against cuts. While the selection of the appropriate glove may seem to be obvious, the record indicates that many hand injuries have occurred because the wrong type of glove was used for a certain task. Therefore, OSHA has determined that employers need more explicit guidance in determining what hand protection their employees need. The agency anticipates that compliance with this provision will assure that employees use the appropriate type of hand protection for the assigned tasks and the identified hazards. "Magid, too, is involved in helping customers, like the picture tube manufacturer, determine the most appropriate glove for the task," says Butler. "Our Magid representatives work closely with us to evaluate and test gloves and other PPE products to help ensure that the correct and body protection is selected."

At a leading die caster, foundry personnel use Kevlar sleeves to protect themselves from the thermal heat of the newly manufactured castings. According to James Greene, personnel director for the die caster, the sleeves are doing their job. "They have significantly reduced the potential for injury in the foundry. Use of Magid's mitts and handguards have also helped us to achieve our goal of providing a safe work environment for our workers." At another metal plant, Safety director, Bob Miller, explains how his company protects its 1,200 employees: "For lacerations, we use leather palm gloves and terrycloth sleeves. When we are making larger parts, they need to be flipped over and put into the machine, and then taken out and flipped again. The sleeves and gloves protect the worker from being cut by the large metal pieces during this process. It's also important to note that all of these parts are oily, so the leather palm helps to insure the parts don't slip through the workers' hands."

With the threat of laceration lurking around every sharp corner, it's imperative that employees wear the right glove for the job. At Magid - where gloves are designed and custom manufactured - we take this decision very seriously, and welcome an opportunity to assist in the evaluation process.