

Hand Protection: Match the Glove to the Task

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | Reviewed October 6, 2026 | Discussion + field checks

Why this matters

A glove that works for carrying material may be wrong for the next step. Chemicals, sharp edges, heat and rotating machinery need different decisions. Start by reducing hand exposure, then select protection for the remaining hazard.

Objective: Explain why the selected glove suits today's task and recognize when gloves could add a hazard.

Key hazards or failure points

Wrong glove for the hazard; chemical breakthrough; cuts through worn material; poor grip or fit; contamination inside; entanglement in rotating parts.

Practical controls

- Use guards, fixtures, handling tools and safe positioning to keep hands away from the hazard. Gloves do not make contact with a blade, pinch point or moving part safe.
- Select the actual glove model using the task assessment and manufacturer's performance information. For chemicals, check the product SDS and glove compatibility for the chemical, concentration, temperature and contact duration.
- Resolve entanglement risks using the machine instructions and approved procedure. Do not apply an "always wear gloves" rule to rotating machinery. Keep required guards in place and follow applicable energy-control procedures.

Verify It in the Field

Before exposure, the leader and worker compare the glove model and markings with the approved selection. If the material or task changed, get the selection reviewed; a familiar color or "cut-resistant" label is not enough.

Inspect the glove inside and out using its instructions. Check tears, wear, contamination and fit. In a clean, safe setup, confirm that the worker can grip and use the required controls without loose material catching.

Confirm the replacement or chemical-use limit from the relevant instructions and assessment. Record the model, source, condition/fit result and checker. Never test a glove by cutting it while worn, touching a hot surface or exposing a hand to a chemical.

Stop and reassess

Pause for unknown suitability, damaged or contaminated gloves, loss of grip, a changed chemical/task, or unresolved entanglement risk. Move out of exposure, report the problem and follow contamination first aid when needed. Correct the method or selection, recheck and rebrief before continuing.

Ask the crew

1. Where can we keep hands out of the hazard instead of relying on gloves?
2. What evidence shows this glove suits this task and duration?
3. What change or defect means we stop and get another decision?

Before exposure: check the method, the exact glove and the fit.

Sources: OSHA 1910.138; 1926.95; CCOHS drill-press guidance; actual product instructions.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.