

How Our Hand Safety Program Reduced Hand Injuries by 45%

Executive Summary

A global producer of wood-based products faced a critical occupational hazard in its operations. Workers handling dry wood frequently sustained splinter injuries serious enough to require surgical removal. Because of these injuries, they decided to completely overhaul their hand safety program, addressing all safety controls.

Their search for a solution led them to discover Superior Glove's comprehensive Hand Safety Program. They were attracted to the program's emphasis on hand safety education and addressing all gaps across safety controls rather than relying solely on personal protective equipment (PPE).

The program was tailored to address their specific needs and focused on cultivating a strong safety culture in the workplace. This led to a 45% reduction in recordable hand injuries, including severe splinter incidences requiring surgical removal, and the establishment of minimum ANSI standards for hand protection.

Results

45%

Reduction in recordable hand injuries across Canadian operations



Reduced splinter incidents requiring surgical removal



Decrease in recordable hand injuries and their severity



Improved compliance and hand safety awareness



Reduction of insurance premiums



Established minimum ANSI standards for protection

How Our Program Reduced Hand Injuries by 45%

Over the course of eight months, Superior Glove's hand safety specialists met with the wood-based product producer's safety specialists, touring their sawmills and delving into the nuances of their work culture, processes, and work environments.

These are the steps they took to achieve results.



Discover

Define hand safety goals

Hand injuries were the highest percentage of recordable incidents at the sawmills. Despite the company having a glove policy, a closer assessment also revealed that a substantial portion of hand injuries were preventable.

Hand Safety Goals

Enlist Leadership Buy-In

Gain full support from the management team to establish the importance of hand safety throughout the organizational hierarchy.

Engage Workers in Hand Safety

Create a culture where workers are not only aware of hand safety but are involved in understanding and implementing best practices.

Provide Comfortable and Effective Protection

Understand challenges and inhibitions workers face when using hand protection and offer solutions that meet safety requirements and comfort to ensure workers will wear the provided protection.

Target Zero Hand Injuries

Strive to eliminate hand injuries with measures that address all safety controls, not only PPE.



Assess

Evaluate all safety controls onsite

Superior Glove conducted an onsite hazard assessment of all workstations at two sawmills to review incident data, analyze hand safety policies and procedures, observe employees at workstations, and collect feedback from worker interviews.

PPE trials were conducted with workers to give them the opportunity to test gloves and provide feedback on performance and comfort. Workers received different gloves tailored to their specific tasks, along with evaluation forms to record their feedback, enabling them to assess performance and comfort.



Report

Analyze findings and provide recommendations

Insight and feedback gathered during the previous step was considered in the context of their hand safety goals and used to finalize the Hand Safety Action Plan.

Hand safety communication and awareness for workers was lacking. In some instances, PPE was used as the first line of defense when closing gaps in other safety controls could reduce or eliminate hazards.

Workers often used the wrong safety gloves for the hazard protection and dexterity level that their job role required, leading to glove fit issues such as discomfort and noncompliance, inhibited productivity, and injuries.

Many tasks required gloves that offered substantially more cut protection and abrasion resistance than their current safety gloves offered. This problem was magnified, as gloves that needed replacement due to wear would continue to be used, leading to splinter injuries through worn seams and holes.

Workers operating pipe poles to guide boards were unprotected from impact hazards when moving hands back and forward. This activity exposed workers to injuries, as they frequently struck the back of their hands during the guiding process.

Based on the evaluation and feedback from the PPE trials, four standard gloves were identified for use across the company's sawmills. Additional glove recommendations were made for workers with role specific safety needs.

Details of adopted glove recommendations can be found in the Glove Recommendation section at the end of this document.

Join our free Hand Safety Program

Visit superiorglove.com and Join our free Hand Safety Program



Deploy

Implement solutions and offer continued support

Change management procedures were revised to ensure effective communication during deployment and leadership was provided with supplementary material to deepen their understanding of hand safety.

The hand safety policy was updated to set minimum glove standards to ensure consistency and effectiveness. A plan was put in place to secure an adequate supply of PPE for both the launch and future needs.

Nudge theory concepts were introduced to subtly influence worker behavior and improve worker safety engagement. Education sessions for stakeholders to familiarize them with the updated safety standards.

Superior Glove partnered with the wood product producer to develop a new prototype glove for their specific needs. This effort was complemented by ongoing support, including the provision of specialized winter gloves.

Internal marketing materials were developed to educate both workers and visitors on the latest hand safety protocols. Comprehensive hand safety training, posters, and educational worksite materials were developed with a focus on behavioral changes, worker engagement, and guiding workers in selecting the appropriate gloves or when to replace worn gloves. Resources like Rethinking Hand Safety were provided to mill managers, equipping them to take ownership of safety initiatives.

Results



Reduction in recordable hand injuries across Canadian operations



Reduced splinter incidents requiring surgical removal



Decrease in recordable hand injuries and their severity



Improved compliance and hand safety awareness



Reduction of insurance premiums



Established minimum ANSI standards for protection

Glove Recommendations

ANSI A4 cut-resistant gloves are now required in all of their operational areas. Four standard issue gloves have been made available, each with varying attributes in grip, back-of-hand protection, and dexterity. Task-specific gloves were also identified to ensure appropriate protection suited to specific workstations or tasks like welding, changing saws, or sharpening knives.

To accommodate all employees, the glove size range has been broadened to include a range of sizes from 2XS to 3XL. These changes streamlined their hand protection offering while providing more effective and comfortable hand protection to all sawmill workers.

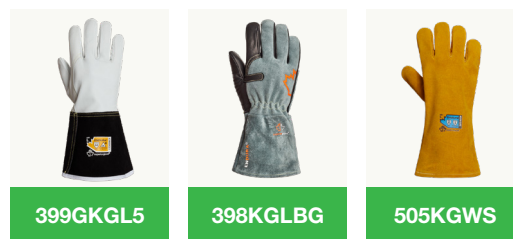
Standard Issue Gloves



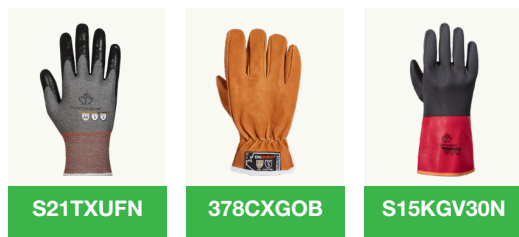
Wood Handling



Welding and Hot Work



Knives, Saws, and Maintenance



Other

