

Manual Cutting

AgSafe Safe Work Procedure

Personal Protective Equipment

1. PPE, such as cut-resistant gloves, are not provided by the employer, or used by the employee.
2. Cut-resistant gloves are not cut-proof. They offer much protection from cuts, but do not completely eliminate the potential for cuts.
3. Gloves provided are cut-resistant, but the characteristics of the gloves are not appropriate for the job (i.e., a regular size glove where a gauntlet type glove should be used).

Condition of Knives and Scissors

1. Knives and scissors are not maintained in top condition.
2. Knives and scissors are not kept sharp.
3. Knives and scissors are of poor design, resulting in awkward grip and/or hand position.

Workstation Design

1. Employee workstations are not adjustable, resulting in some employees working in awkward positions.
2. Improper storage of knives.
3. Employees working too close together can result in cuts to adjacent employees.
4. Lighting is inadequate.
5. Cutting objects are held in the employee's hand instead of on a stable, hard cutting surface.
6. Piecework incentive programs encourage employees to work faster, often at the expense of working safely.

Distractions

1. Employees need to maintain their focus on the task they are performing.
2. Distractions such as loud noises, music, and poor lighting can divert the employee's attention, increasing the risk for cuts and lacerations.

Automated Cutting Systems

1. Machine guards are removed or missing.
2. Adjustments are made while a machine is in operation.
3. Machine is cleaned while in operation.
4. Protective gloves can get caught in moving machinery and pull the employee's hand into the machine.

What steps can an employer take to analyze the worksite for cut and laceration hazards?

1. Perform regular evaluations of the work environment to ensure PPE is provided, maintained, and used properly, machine guarding is in place and properly adjusted, and Lockout/Tagout procedures are developed and implemented.
2. Investigate incidents.
3. Investigate near-miss incidents.
4. Implement a system for employees to notify management of hazards that might result in cuts and lacerations.

What can employers and employees do to prevent cuts and lacerations?

Manual Cutting

Knives

Condition

1. Keep knives sharp
2. Keep knives in good condition
3. Remove damaged knives from service

Design

1. Use the appropriate knife
2. Use knives with a comfortable handle
3. Use an angled handle-blade design to reduce awkward body positions

Scissors

Condition

1. Keep scissors sharp
2. Remove damaged scissors from service

Design

1. Use scissors with oversized cushioned grips and spring-action handles to reduce fatigue and hand discomfort.
2. Use offset handles to reduce awkward wrist and arm positions.
3. Ensure an adequate supply of left-handed scissors for left-handed employees.

PPE

1. Provide and use cut-resistant gloves.
2. Maintain gloves in good condition.
3. Remove damaged gloves from service and replace them.

Workstation Design

1. Ensure work surfaces are at an appropriate height for employees.
2. Ensure there is adequate workspace around each employee.

Automated Cutting Systems
Machine Guarding

1. Make sure machine guards are in place, adjusted properly, and used.
2. Replace guards that have been removed for adjustments, repair, or cleaning, before the machine is started.
3. Use PPE when guards are removed for cleaning, repairing, and adjusting machinery.

Lockout/Tagout

1. Lock out and/or block out all sources of energy before any adjustment, repair, or cleaning is conducted on machinery.
2. Use PPE when guards are removed for cleaning, repair, and adjusting machinery.

Please use the following ***Safe Work Procedures*** as a guideline to building your own safe work procedures.