

Safety in Wind Energy – Reducing Hand Injuries

AWEA's Safety and Health Strategy:

Worker safety and health are core values of the wind energy industry.

Support continuous training of wind industry employers and employees.

Empower workers to take ownership of safety and health programs.

Educate and Cooperate regulating agencies about how wind projects are developed and maintained.

Create and Distribute appropriate safety and health training programs and educational materials.

Monitor the injury and illness rate within the industry.

Identify high hazard areas.

Develop solutions to eliminate or reduce these hazards

Always remember to report injuries and incidents to the supervisor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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We use them to eat, play, work, greet each other, and provide care for our families. As a matter of fact, there is very little we do in life that does not require the use of our hands. To lose even partial use of just one of them can be surprisingly disabling, yet we tend to take them for granted until injury occurs. Hand injuries are one of the highest frequencies of injury on wind energy construction projects.

Complacency

Everything we do involves our hands. This fact in itself breeds complacency. Though we may be more aware of hand placement while conducting known hazardous tasks such as operating a saw, we tend to be more reactive about hand placement during tasks that do not involve obvious hand hazards. Even the simple act of placing our hand on a surface in order to lean or support ourselves, without first checking for sharp edges, debris, or potential moving materials and equipment can and does lead to hand injuries.

Abatement Tips

- Reduce complacency by addressing hand safety at each pre-task safety meeting as well as through reminders during the day.
- Ensure specific hand hazards and abatement actions, including glove selection and use, are addressed in all job safety analysis (JSA).

Balance & Reaction

Many hand injuries are the result of bodily reaction to balance or other instability issues such as a poorly planned work platform or body position. When someone loses their balance or grip, their hands automatically react to catch them or what they dropped. These are unplanned events with little to no time to consider the hazards.

Abatement Tips

- Require and use stable walking surfaces or work platforms for all employee tasks.
- Require and use work tables, vises, clamps or other stabilizing devices.
- Discuss hand and body placement in pre-task meetings and JSAs.
- Practice consistent good housekeeping.



Improper Tool Use

Most hand injuries are caused by the improper use and/or selection of hand tools.

Abatement Tips

- Choose and use the right tool for the job.
- Use the safest tool for the job.
- Inspect tools prior to use. Never use worn or broken tools.

Hygiene

The hands are often victim to small, almost un-noticeable cuts and scratches, which make them susceptible to infection from touched materials, dirty/sweaty gloves, etc.

Abatement Tips

- Frequent hand washing is the most effective means to prevent infection.
- Always wash and apply first aid to any break in hand skin, no matter how minor.