

Risk Manager

Answers, resources and information to help assess and reduce risk

Preventing Cuts, Punctures and Lacerations By Keith Myers

Cuts, lacerations and punctures are a common injury in the workplace. However, many of these injuries may be prevented by the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Having and enforcing a policy on the use of PPE may assist in reducing the amount of severity of cut incidents.

Cut resistant gloves when fit and used properly may help to reduce the number of cuts, lacerations and punctures. Cut resistant gloves should be used but are not limited to, when the following situations occur:

- Any time an employee is using a sharp implement (ex: knife, boxer cutter or paper cutter) to do any cutting or chopping
- Any time an employee is using a piece of equipment that has any moving parts that may have a sharp implement (ex: meat grinder, meat slicer or hacksaw)
- Any time an employee is cleaning a piece of equipment that has any sharp implement (ex: meat slicer, meat grinder or power saw)

Always remember that cuts, lacerations and punctures can still occur while using cut resistant gloves, they are not cut proof, only cut resistant. A policy should also be in place and enforced for cut resistant gloves.

Bite or arm guards are a necessary piece of personal protective equipment when dealing with students who may act out in an unruly manner. These guards may help to protect an employee

from being bitten when coming in close contact with a student. These guards should be worn in the following situations:

- Any time while moving a student who has a history of biting
- Any time while working in close contact with a student who has a history of biting
- When dealing with a student who is having an episode and there needs to be de-escalation

Having a policy in place for these guards, along with enforcement of the policy may help to reduce the number of incidents relating to employees being bitten. Cuts, laceration and punctures may also be prevented by:

- Eliminating the source of power to a piece of equipment before cleaning or completing any work to it (ex: removing the plug before cleaning a meat slicer or changing the blade on a power saw)
- Placing sharp implements in a designated area when they need cleaned (ex: placing all knives in a container next to the sink instead of in the water when they need cleaned)

Having a policy in place and enforcing a policy on the handling of sharp implements may help in reducing the frequency and severity of cut, laceration and puncture incidents.

Cuts, laceration and punctures account for many workplace incidents each and every year. Providing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), and by developing and enforcing a policy on the handling of sharp implements and PPE may help in reducing the frequency and severity of incidents.

For additional information or training on best practices and safety management within your school entity, please contact Director of Risk Management Sharon Orr at (866) 401-6600, ext. 7152 or sorr@cmregent.com.