EDUCATING USERS ABOUT WORK SAFETY

ANTHONY DI GIOVANNI, VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL MARKETING, PROTECTIVE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

While the American worker and employer have developed a safety mindset, there are still areas where we can be stronger. Ubiquitous adoption of conformity assessment as stipulated in the ANSI/ISEA 125-2014 ensures that only quality-tested products would be considered as proper PPE for workers. This would help eliminate low-cost importers who do not adequately meet standards.

PIP educates and trains its distributors on safety standards. We seek to simplify the complex standards and rely heavily on infographics, visual aids and demonstrations in our training sessions. With the recent ANSI and EN revisions on gloves, PIP has been very proactive with clear documentation to communicate the knowledge and relevance of the changes to our customers.

Another challenge is related to product selection. While the standards do an excellent job of outlining performance standards, it does not always easily translate to real-life application. In the case of gloves, it is often our experience that cut level is equated with quality. "The higher the cut score, the better the glove." We all know that this is not the intent. Our challenge is to help customers make informed, confident decisions on their PPE.

Recently, PIP developed the Cut Risk Hazard Matrix that helps users choose the right cut-resistant gloves by equating the task to the "edge sharpness" and "force." At the same time, we introduced a mobile phone app that allows qualified distributors to do on-site safety assessment for gloves, providing a full report that outlines risk and recommendations for safety improvement as well as suggested cost savings.


DI GIOVANNI

WHY DON'T WORKERS WEAR GLOVES?

MARY PADRON, MARCOM & EVENT SPECIALIST, RADIANS

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that wearing gloves reduces the relative risk of hand injuries by 60 percent. That's a pretty good statistic, which should encourage industrial and construction workers to put on their gloves. However, safety professionals are frequently challenged—on a daily basis—by workers who won't willingly put on their work gloves or by employees who won't consistently wear their gloves during the work day.

The BLS says hand injuries are the No. 2 leading cause of work-related injury and the most preventable, yet they send more than one million workers to the emergency room annually.

So why don't workers wear gloves?

Workers often don't wear gloves because many gloves in the marketplace are too bulky or don't allow for the dexterity and control that workers need to do their jobs. Or, after extended wear, the glove becomes hot, awkward and downright uncomfortable.

What can suppliers do to improve compliance for hand protection?

Savvy suppliers of hand protection understand that "protection and comfort are both knights at the round-table." Leading manufacturers are actively listening to the "uncomfortable" complaints made by industrial workers and are engineering gloves made with Dyneema Diamond Technology, which is the new standard in cut protection – providing double to triple improvement in cut resistance with gloves that are 40 percent lighter than gloves made with aramid fiber. The thin fiber and unique polymer dramatically aid in producing a glove that is comfortable to wear.

Some benefits of gloves made with Dyneema Diamond Technology include:

- Better feel and control
- Radiates heat away from hands for all-day comfort
- High strength
- Cool-touch comfort
- Increased cut resistance without fiberglass discomfort
- Durable and washable for long lasting protection
- Resistant to UV and chemicals, like bleach
- Floats on water


PADRON

HAND PROTECTION FROM ARC FLASH HAZARDS

RANDAL FISHER, VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING, BLACK STALLION INDUSTRIES

Electrical burns from arc flash hazards in the workplace are a serious issue. Approximately 2,000 workers are admitted for hospital treatment each and every year due to injury from electric shock and arc flash. As more and more state OSHA agencies use the NFPA 70E standards as part of their workplace evaluation, we are seeing increased requests for gloves and garments that include protection from an arc flash hazard.

NFPA 70E provides clear guidelines for safeguarding employees from the hazards associated with electrical energy during activities such as the installation, inspection, operation, maintenance and demolition of electric conductors and electric equipment, and assists in complying with OSHA 1910 Subpart S and OSHA 1926 Subpart K.

In addition to the fields typically associated with arc flash and flash fire mandates, including oil and gas, electrical utility and power generation, we are now seeing arc flash protection requirements in construction, assembly and general industrial, as well. Safety managers and other safety professionals are challenged more than ever with protecting workers in multi-hazard environments. And, they are looking to PPE manufacturers for unique solutions.

As a leading manufacturer of flame-resistant gloves and garments, Black Stallion is leveraging our FR expertise to offer a comprehensive selection of arc-rated apparel, including new gloves we are introducing this month. The new A61 (30 cal/cm2) and A62 (26 cal/cm2) cowhide and FR cotton gloves can be used as part of a category 3 PPE program for work with potential exposure to energized electrical equipment.

We also offer arc-rated FR coveralls, work shirts, work pants, t-shirts, jackets, balaclavas and vests. Our products are available through a nationwide system of welding, industrial and safety distributors.


FISHER

WORKERS NEED TO PROTECT KNEES TOO

JACOB THOMAS, ERGONOMIC SPECIALIST, GREENLEE

Personal protective equipment (PPE) does not just prevent injuries to the head, chest and arms. In fact, ergonomic kneepads are a great protective item. Kneepads are needed for any work where an individual will be kneeling on hard surfaces. Sore, aching knees caused by constant harsh pressure on concrete, or other hard surfaces, are a source of distraction for workers and can lead to errors, accidents and a reduction in productivity.

Ergonomic kneepads can address a whole host of injuries and conditions. Common injuries that can be prevented by wearing kneepads include knee pain, which can result in arthritis; knee bursitis from impact and compression; muscle strains resulting in low back pain; and degenerative disk disease, which can cause permanent damage to the bones of the spine. In addition to heading off injuries, ergonomic kneepads can soothe workers who currently experience soreness in their knees and back. Workers will not only notice the change, they will feel it and appreciate it.

There are a variety of kneepads available to choose from, so before ordering, we recommend evaluating the following factors:

- The type of surface that workers are kneeling on
- What features are best suited for that surface
- The amount of cushioning that is needed (consider time spent kneeling and the worker's weight)

Evaluate the durability of the product and the manufacturer by learning the OEM's warranty and whether they will provide aftermarket support. By investing in ergonomic kneepads, employers show workers their health is of value, which might just improve morale and productivity.


THOMAS