

OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Personal Protective Equipment – Hand Protection / Chemicals

[Reference 1910.138) / 1926.95]

OSHA's standards for hand protection require employers to provide, and employees to use, personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves that are designed to help protect workers from the hazards of exposures to harmful chemicals. The effects of different types of chemical exposure could range from slight (dermatitis) to severe (cancer). So it is vitally important to make certain that the gloves you select for use are adequate to protect against the specific chemical(s) you use.

While chemical gloves are made from a variety of materials (such as rubber, nitrile, latex, butyl, and neoprene), not all chemical gloves offer adequate protection from all chemicals. For example, a glove made from natural rubber offers very good protection from the solvent Acetone, yet it deteriorates very quickly (therefore offering very poor protection) when exposed to the solvent Xylene. So remember, just because a glove is used to protect you from one chemical does not mean it is necessarily going to protect you from a different chemical.

The company has performed PPE hazard assessments of our jobs to identify chemical hazards and select the proper gloves for use for the specific tasks we perform at work. Where does the company find information about the proper glove to use for protection from specific chemicals? There are several options for reference, including:

- **Glove Manufacturers Information** – they provide chemical resistance ratings for different glove materials when exposed to a variety of chemicals;
- **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)** – some MSDS's offer guidance on specific glove materials to use and to avoid when working with that product;
- **OSHA Publication #3151** ([click here to view / print this publication](#)) – this document, titled Personal Protective Equipment, offers a comprehensive “Chemical Resistance Selection Chart for Protective Gloves”.

If you have any concerns that the gloves you are currently using when working with chemicals are not protecting your hands adequately, or if there are new chemicals introduced into your work area, please notify your supervisor right away so that we can schedule a new or subsequent PPE hazard assessment, and make changes where necessary.

Any question or comment about hand protection when working with chemicals? Please be sure to sign-in on the training certification form.