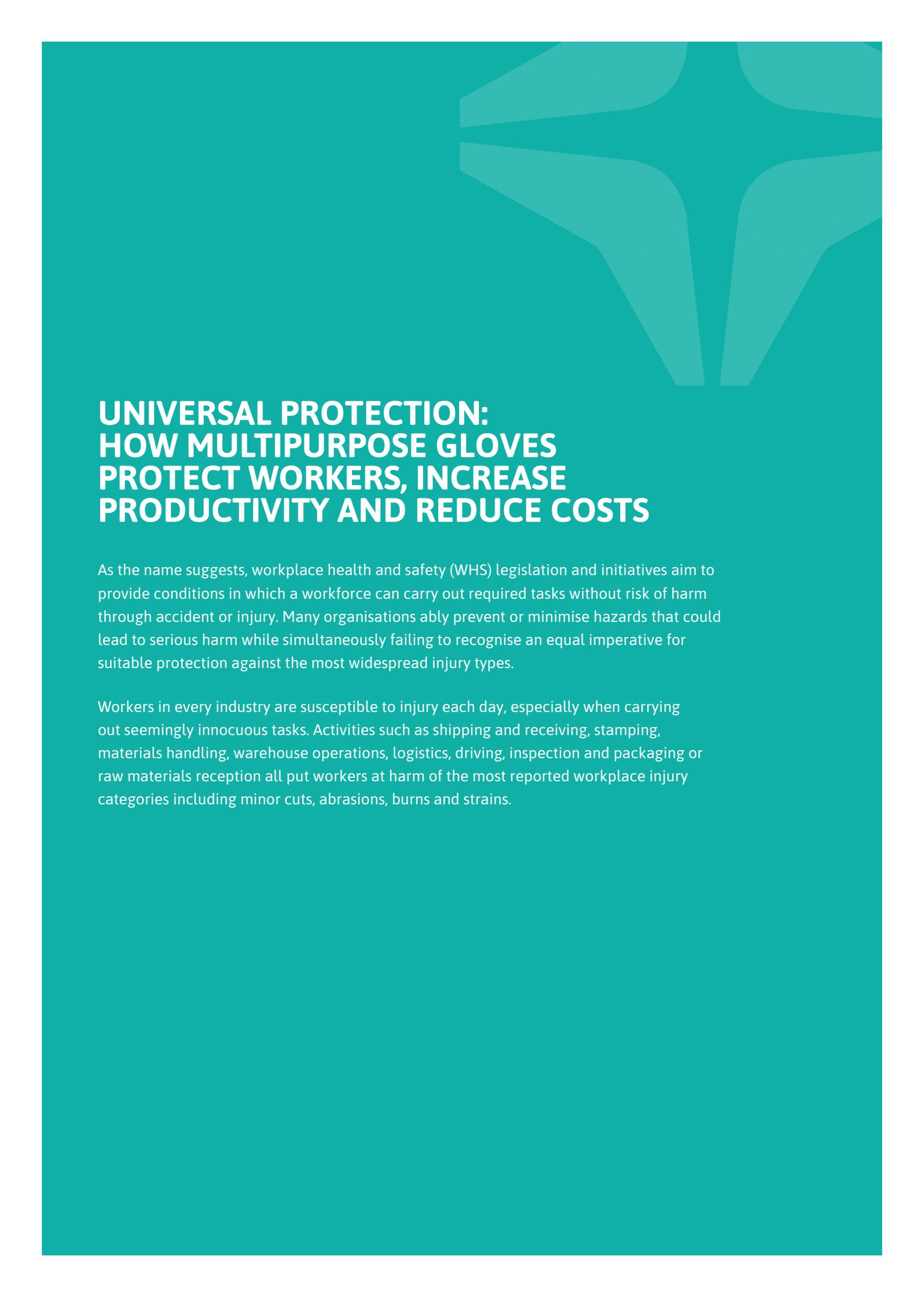




Ansell

**UNIVERSAL PROTECTION:  
HOW MULTIPURPOSE  
GLOVES PROTECT WORKERS,  
INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY  
AND REDUCE COSTS**



# UNIVERSAL PROTECTION: HOW MULTIPURPOSE GLOVES PROTECT WORKERS, INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND REDUCE COSTS

As the name suggests, workplace health and safety (WHS) legislation and initiatives aim to provide conditions in which a workforce can carry out required tasks without risk of harm through accident or injury. Many organisations ably prevent or minimise hazards that could lead to serious harm while simultaneously failing to recognise an equal imperative for suitable protection against the most widespread injury types.

Workers in every industry are susceptible to injury each day, especially when carrying out seemingly innocuous tasks. Activities such as shipping and receiving, stamping, materials handling, warehouse operations, logistics, driving, inspection and packaging or raw materials reception all put workers at harm of the most reported workplace injury categories including minor cuts, abrasions, burns and strains.

## LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF 'SIMPLE' INJURIES

Almost three quarters of workplace accidents in the EU result in wounds and superficial injuries, dislocations, sprains and strains or concussion and internal injuries<sup>1</sup>. Hand and arm injury are among the most common types, with nearly half (43%) of the 2.5 million EU workplace injuries reported in 2017 confined to the upper extremities<sup>2</sup>.

Simple sprains and strains can be further exacerbated through repetitive work practices and insufficient risk minimisation, giving rise to musculoskeletal disorders that require ongoing treatment. That makes hand injury particularly challenging for both businesses and individuals, as it can easily render workers unfit for regular duties and lead to extended periods of recuperation and rehabilitation. Redeployment into other roles can be difficult, as functioning hands and a reasonable degree of dexterity are required to conduct even the most general of tasks.

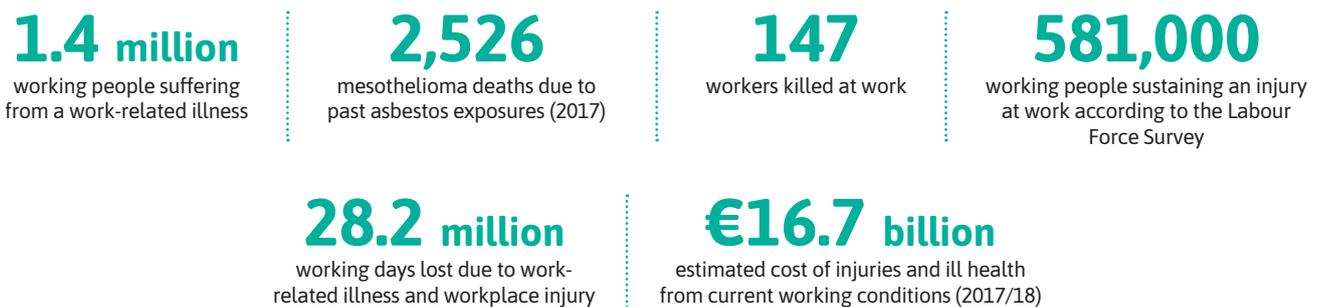


## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT

Businesses incur many ancillary costs associated with injury including loss of production and productivity, insurance, legal, administrative, recruitment, fines, and health & rehabilitation expenses.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that work-related accidents and disease contribute to an annual 4% loss in gross domestic product (GDP) globally. It further puts the cost of work-related disease, including musculoskeletal disorders, at €145 billion per annum for the EU alone<sup>3</sup>. In the UK, the average cost of a non-fatal work injury requiring a seven days absence from work is £4,538<sup>4</sup>.

Given the avoidable nature of these injuries, the sizeable financial impact, and the broad availability of personal protective solutions (PPE), it is difficult to comprehend why the numbers remain so high.



## WHY INJURIES OCCUR

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In many instances, preventable injury occurs because WHS managers are having difficulties to recognise the inherent risks associated with specific tasks and duties and subsequently neglect provision of appropriate PPE, including gloves.

However, studies consistently indicate that a far more common reason is discomfort, which causes sixty percent of workers to forgo the use of issued hand protection solutions entirely, citing both a lack of comfort and interference with performance as the key reasons for doing so<sup>5</sup>.

While most safety managers strive to identify potential workplace hazards and minimise the risk of accident and injury, selection of improper hand protection can prove more dangerous than the identified hazard itself. While adequate safety is the overall aim, so too is optimum productivity – and workers should not be forced to choose between the two.

The difficulty with correct risk identification is that the root cause of a hand injury is not always the most obvious one. A lack of proper grip or hand fatigue arising from sustained repetitive movement can easily lead to injury through slipping, for example. In the presence of sharp implements or edges, this could further create risk of puncture or cut injury. While the latter is obvious and clearly identified, it can impede recognition of the underlying conditions that gave rise to all subsequent risks.



## COMFORT, QUALITY AND CONSTRUCTION

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The use of multipurpose gloves for generalised tasks and assignments including handling, carrying, packing and warehousing activities, among others, provides a suitable degree of defence against harm from present risks.

As with PPE designed to protect against specific hazard, the quality of a multipurpose hand protection solution can have profound impact on budget outcomes. Lesser quality or cheaper gloves — which may or may not deliver appropriate protection — often cost more in the long run, as they need to be replaced more frequently.

Durability should be a key factor in the glove selection process, as there is an intrinsic relationship between optimal construction and the prevention of injury, improved productivity, and cost minimisation. The more durable the glove, the lower the cost per wear, so it makes sense to consider components that determine longevity, specifically as they apply to any given environment or application.

Improvements in coating technologies, material construction and production techniques have led to the development of a better, more enduring product. When assessing alternative hand protection solutions, consider both the coating and liner materials, as variations in the characteristics of each will determine the most appropriate choice for the environmental and task-specific parameters of your individual workplace.

## ONE CHOICE, MANY APPLICATIONS

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While many activities present risks that necessitate the use of specific hand protection solutions designed to address cut, impact or other serious injury risks, an overwhelming number of preventable workplace incidents occur because workers use no protection at all.

A well designed and constructed multipurpose safety glove can be the difference between avoidable injury and optimum safety, regardless of industry, occupation, or activity. Given the potential for short-term harm to transform into an enduring and debilitating condition, provision of suitable multipurpose hand protection should be within the arsenal of every safety professional.

While it makes sense to work with a vendor that can provide assistance in the identification and rationalisation of your specific PPE requirements, it is equally important to create a feedback mechanism that incorporates the wearers themselves, who are uniquely positioned to provide insight into comfort and suitability. PPE selection and assessment ideally feeds into a larger program of analysis, benchmarking and continuous improvement, allowing safety professionals to determine and implement process and procedural changes designed to deliver significant safety and economic enhancement.

While every workplace is different, every worker deserves to be protected. Selecting a comfortable and durable multipurpose glove for use across a range of tasks and areas of responsibility will encourage PPE policy compliance, provide a valuable safeguard and improve productivity – while ultimately delivering a better bottom line.



**For more information, visit [www.ansell.com](http://www.ansell.com)**

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