

SAFETY ALERT



AUSTRALIAN STEEL INSTITUTE
SAFETY GROUP

"Sharing incident learnings amongst ASI member companies"

"A vision of a safer steel industry"

Number:	SA0038
Subject:	Sharp Steel Edges - Cuts to Hands, Fingers and Arms
Date:	December 2010

Incident:

- Recently a steel distribution and solutions business has reported several injuries involving cuts from sharp steel edges. Three examples include:
 - Cleaning silicone from a shed window and cut thumb on steel flashing, one stitch required.
 - Laceration when a sharp edge of a steel sheet made contact between cut resistant glove and arm guard, five stitches required to wrist.
 - Pulling on steel strap when it jammed and cut through leather riggers glove, seven stitches required to palm of hand.



Cuts to unprotected wrists from steel strapping.



Examples of cut resistant glove and arm guard combinations.

Key Lessons:

- When physically handling light gauge steel products and steel strapping there is a risk of laceration from sharp steel edges.
- These sharp steel edges can cut like a knife through standard leather gloves and cotton drill clothing.
- The key risk / injury prone areas of the body include hands, fingers and arms. Injuries of this nature can often require multiple stitches as treatment.

Recommendations:

- Exposure to sharp steel edges and strapping should be eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable. E.g. Substitute steel strapping with alternative methods of banding (with approved engineering), reduce the manual handling of steel products and steel strapping.
- At minimum it is recommended, ***Cut resistant gloves and arm guards be worn when handling light gauge steel sheet and coil, cold or roll formed products, and steel strapping.*** (Recommended minimum cut resistance Level 4 meeting relevant Australian Standards)
- Ensure there is a positive seal (no gap) between cut resistant gloves and arm guards to prevent exposure of the wrist area.

For further information please contact **Phil Casey** – ASI National Safety Group Coordinator:
Tel: (02) 9931 6666; Fax (02) 9931 6633; Email philc@steel.org.au

*** Safety Alerts are distributed by the Australian Steel Institute as general information ONLY and are not intended as specific recommendations or advice ***