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## Glove protection

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To be protective, gloves must provide a barrier between the hazards and your hands. Gloves are selected and worn to protect your hands from abrasions/scrapes, cuts, burns, contact dermatitis, other skin disorders caused by skin contact with chemicals, or a combination of these.

The chemical content of the products, the materials being used, and the tasks performed are all important and should be taken into consideration when selecting gloves and determining if they need to be replaced.

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### Signs gloves should be replaced:

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#### 1. Gloves are abraded, ripped, torn, or punctured.

- For protection from abrasions, punctures, and cuts, some minor wear and tear may be acceptable, as long as it won't expose your hand to injury.
- For protection from chemicals, gloves must be replaced whenever they are abraded, ripped, torn, or punctured – even if it's a pinhole.

#### 2. Gloves show signs of degradation – a change in the physical properties of the glove material resulting from exposure to chemicals or temperature extremes, such as:

- The glove material is harder, softer, or weaker than when it was new.
- The glove material is brittle, blistered, swollen, or discolored.

Whenever there are signs of degradation, the glove material is damaged, is not providing the intended protection from chemicals, and should be replaced.

#### 3. Chemicals have permeated the gloves you are wearing.

- Gloves should be removed and replaced immediately if **any** liquid has passed through the glove material.
- Manufacturers rate each type of glove based on how resistant they are to various chemicals and how long it takes for these chemicals to permeate, or pass through, the glove material. Gloves should be replaced before the permeation time indicated by the manufacturer.

#### 4. Gloves that are grossly contaminated with a product/chemical and cannot be cleaned should be thrown out. This applies to both the interior and exterior of the gloves.

- **Remember**, the goal is to keep your skin from coming in contact with the product. If the inside of your gloves has become contaminated, then putting the gloves on will trap the product/chemical against your skin.



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### Discussion questions

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- ⇒ **Have you checked the gloves you will be using today? Let's do it now.**
- ⇒ **If you need replacement gloves, do you know who to ask or where to find them?**

Visit [www.choosehandsafety.org](http://www.choosehandsafety.org) to learn more about preventing dermatitis and other skin disorders.

\*Resources: Developed with assistance from Michael R. Cooper, CIH, CSP, MPH  
Source: CPWR -- A Safety & Health Practitioner's Guide to Skin Protection

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