SAFETY & EQUIPMENT GUIDE

Cut-Resistant Work Gloves in Canada

A practical industrial buyer’s guide to task-based selection



Task-based PPE selection for Canadian industrial work

Important: This guide is educational. Confirm the task assessment, manufacturer instructions, site procedure, and applicable jurisdictional requirements before issuing PPE.

Cut-resistant work gloves should be selected from the task and hazard assessment, not from a job title or a cut rating alone. For Canadian industrial work, start by identifying the material being handled, how the hand could contact an edge, the force and frequency involved, and any additional exposure such as puncture, impact, abrasion, heat, cold, liquids, or chemicals. Then compare the manufacturer's stated performance data, fit, grip, and work instructions against the site procedure and the requirements that apply where the work is performed.

SELECTION CHECKLIST

Key takeaways ANSI/ISEA cut levels run from A1 to A9. A higher level indicates greater resistance to a standardized blade-cut test; it does not make a glove cut-proof or suitable for every hazard. Choose for the actual task: the material, edge, handling method, required grip, dexterity, and all secondary hazards matter. Check the product's performance information and manufacturer instructions. Cut rating, coating, lining, cuff length, fit, and compatibility with other PPE can change the answer. Canadian requirements vary by province, territory, industry, and site. Confirm the task assessment and local rules before issuing PPE.

Why cut-resistant gloves need a task-first selection process

"Cut resistant" describes one performance property. It does not answer whether a glove has enough grip for oily parts, protection from a pointed hazard, insulation from cold, protection from heat, or compatibility with a chemical. CCOHS advises buyers to start with an accurate task description and identify all hazards that may require hand protection. Its checklist includes abrasion, tearing, puncture, temperature, biological hazards, required flexibility, tactile sensitivity, grip, contact period, care, and decontamination.

For example, handling cardboard or plastic strapping may call for a different balance of cut resistance and dexterity than handling sharp metal, stamped parts, glass, recycling material, or slitter blades. A glove that is comfortable enough to wear correctly is important, but comfort alone does not establish suitability. The final choice needs to match the documented exposure and the manufacturer's stated data for the specific glove.

What ANSI/ISEA A1 to A9 cut ratings mean

ANSI/ISEA 105-2024 is a voluntary American consensus classification for several hand and arm protection performance properties. Its cut-resistance scale has nine levels, A1 through A9. Higher levels show greater resistance to a standardized blade-cut test. The rating is useful because it helps safety teams compare tested glove performance, but it is not a work instruction and it does not cover every exposure.

Use the level as a starting point after the task assessment. Lower-to-mid ratings may be considered where the cut exposure is limited and dexterity is critical. Higher ratings may be evaluated for more severe sharp-edge handling. Do not convert that statement into a universal purchasing rule. A job may need more than a cut rating because the same work can involve puncture, abrasion, impact, heat, cold, wet conditions, or chemicals. As a practical training cross-check, Grainger's cut-resistant glove overview likewise frames ANSI levels alongside task severity, secondary hazards, and grip; use it as an orientation aid, not as a site-specific selection rule.

SELECTION CHECKLIST

A practical decision sequence Describe the task: identify the material, edges, tools, force, repetition, and how hands are positioned. Identify every hand hazard: assess cuts alongside puncture, abrasion, impact,

heat, cold, liquids, chemicals, electrical risk, and entanglement potential. Set the protection requirement: use the site assessment and applicable rules to establish the needed cut performance and secondary protection. Check usability: confirm grip, dexterity, cuff coverage, sizing, fit, and compatibility with sleeves, clothing, tools, and other PPE. Verify the product: review the manufacturer's performance information, care instructions, limitations, and inspection criteria before issue. Train and inspect: make sure workers know the glove's limits, when to replace it, and how to report damage or loss of grip.

Match the whole glove to the work, not only the cut level

Sharp-edge handling and material movement

Consider whether the exposure is a light incidental edge, a sharp stationary edge, a moving or powered edge, or a heavy sharp material that can shift in the hand. The condition of the material matters as much as its name. A burr, damaged edge, pinch point, or unexpected slip can change the risk. Use the task assessment to decide whether the glove also needs abrasion, puncture, or impact performance.

Grip and dexterity

Grip can affect safety. A glove that reduces a worker's ability to hold a part, operate a control, or use a tool can increase the chance of a slip. CCOHS identifies grip, flexibility, and tactile sensitivity as selection factors. Where the work is dry or lightly oily, compare the manufacturer's coating and grip information for the actual surface. Where liquid or chemical contact is possible, do not assume a cut-resistant knit or coating provides chemical protection.

Heat, cold, chemicals, and electrical exposure

These are separate selection questions. CCOHS notes that no glove material remains resistant to every chemical and that chemical protection depends on the substance, concentration, contact type, duration, material thickness, and product quality. For chemical work, consult the SDS, manufacturer compatibility information, and the site process. For electrical work, do not treat a cut rating as electrical protection. For hot work, cold work, or welding, verify the specific thermal and task limitations in the manufacturer documentation.

Rotating equipment and entanglement

Moving machinery requires a separate equipment-specific review. Follow the equipment manufacturer's instructions, the site procedure, and the work-control method before introducing any glove near rotating shafts, spindles, gears, belts, or other moving parts. Do not add a glove simply because it has a high cut rating.

Fit, inspection, and replacement are part of the protection system

A glove must fit the worker and cover the exposure appropriately. Check sizing, cuff length, dexterity, compatibility with sleeves, and any risk of a gap at the wrist. Before use, inspect for tears, holes, worn coating, damaged stitching, contamination, loss of grip, and any condition identified by the manufacturer. Remove damaged gloves from service and follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning, decontamination, storage, and replacement.

Ontario provides one Canadian example of the need for training and suitable protection. Ontario Regulation 851 requires workers to be instructed and trained in the care and use of required protective equipment and, where a worker is exposed to a listed sharp or jagged-object hazard, requires protection appropriate in the circumstances. Other Canadian jurisdictions and industries may use different rules or guidance, so confirm the requirements that apply to the site.

How to use this guide when buying gloves

Start with the product pages in our Hand, Knee & Elbow Protection collection, then compare the manufacturer-stated performance data against your written task assessment. Do not select a product solely because it is labelled cut-resistant, high-visibility, insulated, leather, coated, or heavy-duty. Review the product instructions, request the applicable technical data, and involve the person responsible for your PPE program where the task is complex or the exposure is severe.

If you are sourcing gloves for a crew, a project, or a recurring work program, discuss your requirements with Total Group. Bring the material being handled, the type of edge, the work environment, any secondary hazards, the required sizes, and the expected usage pattern. That information supports a more useful product discussion than a rating alone.

Frequently asked questions

Does a higher ANSI cut level always mean a better glove?

No. A higher level means greater resistance to a standardized blade-cut test. It may reduce dexterity, change grip, or still leave other hazards unaddressed. Choose the level that the task assessment requires, then confirm the glove's other performance properties and instructions.

Are cut-resistant gloves cut-proof?

No. Cut resistance is a tested performance property, not a guarantee against every blade, force, angle, puncture, powered tool, or wear condition. Inspect gloves and follow the site procedure and manufacturer limits.

Can cut-resistant gloves be used around chemicals?

Only when the specific glove is confirmed for the chemical, concentration, contact type, and duration. CCOHS cautions that no one glove material is resistant to all chemicals. Use the SDS and manufacturer compatibility information.

What should a Canadian employer verify before issuing cut-resistant gloves?

Verify the documented task and hazards, product performance data, fit and sizes, grip and dexterity needs, training, care and replacement instructions, site procedure, and the provincial, territorial, or sector requirements that apply to the work.

Important limits

This guide provides general industrial safety information. It is not legal advice, a site-specific risk assessment, or a determination that a glove is suitable for a particular job. Confirm the task, hazards, worker training, manufacturer instructions, product documentation, site procedure, and applicable provincial, territorial, or industry requirements before making a PPE decision.

Sources

1. Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety — Chemical Protective Clothing: Glove Selection
2. ANSI — ANSI/ISEA 105-2024: Hand Protection & Cut Level Ratings
3. Ontario Regulation 851 — Industrial Establishments
4. Grainger — Choosing the Right Pair of Cut-Resistant Gloves