



Safety

How SHOWA EBT Gloves Protect Both Workers and Their Environment

James Langford | Sep 03, 2024

The goal of SHOWA Group's industrial gloves has always been protection.

At first, it was the protection of the wearers themselves, from a variety of workplace hazards.

In the past decade, however, their protective capabilities have evolved to include the wearer's descendants, who will reap the environmental benefits of the PPE-maker's biodegradable Eco Best gloves.

"It was great that we were protecting the end user," says Brian Moseley, the company's manager of regulatory affairs and quality assurance, "but we needed to go a step further, because the environment is what we live in. We must be sustainable."

SHOWA and its competitors were making billions of nitrile gloves a year by the early 2010s, he says, when SHOWA began evaluating the impact of the disposable handwear on the environment, a process that resulted in the introduction of SHOWA's first biodegradable nitrile glove in 2012.

Today, the company boasts the most extensive range of them on the market through its Eco Best portfolio.

The handwear is engineered with an organic additive that enables decomposition within one to five years, the company says, compared with more than 100 years for other products.

GreenCircle Certification

"EBT allows the nitrile to start breaking down once it enters a landfill because it's made up of atoms like carbon and hydrogen, the same kind found in a banana peel and several other things we dispose of daily," Moseley explains. "Microbes see the glove as food, essentially, and something that they can break down. Once that glove enters the landfill, the microbes don't look at it as an inert object but as something that they can utilize."

And they do so with astonishing quickness.

Testing from independent laboratories, in fact, has shown Eco Best gloves decomposed 82 percent in 386 days, a little more than a year, while gloves without the additive decayed only 1.9 percent in the same period, SHOWA says.

In 2022, the company won **GreenCircle certification** for eight biodegradable protective gloves. GreenCircle, founded in 2009, evaluates the accuracy of product-sustainability claims by global manufacturers.

“We have two things that we think we must look after,” Moseley says. “The first is our end users. We want them to go home every day to their families, knowing that they were protected by a SHOWA product, because they’re there working for their families. So it’s very important that we do not have a product that is inferior. We also want to go home knowing that we did what’s right for the environment in addition to protecting the end users because that way, we’re protecting what the end user’s children are going to inherit a generation or two later, which is the environment.”

The biodegradability of Eco Best gloves garnered heightened attention during the pandemic, when use of PPE soared as consumers and workers alike donned gear more frequently to avoid infection—and disposed of it quickly afterward.

Looking for more sustainable PPE? Click here to check out the selection of biodegradable SHOWA gloves on mscdirect.com.

“Single-use glove waste rose over tenfold due to the spike in usage,” SHOWA says in a statement.

While the company’s Eco Best gloves tackle that problem head-on, SHOWA has also pledged to keep investing heavily in the research and development of products with lower environmental impact.

Its Eco Best gloves include the following models:

Reusable Gloves

- **SHOWA 383:** The world’s first biodegradable working glove, it features reduced thickness to ensure the most tactility possible when working on delicate projects. The glove, which is designed to provide comfort and flexibility for extended wear, is made of microporous biodegradable nitrile engineered with 13-gauge seamless knit liner. It’s abrasion-resistant, oil-resistant, latex-free, reusable and biodegradable.

Disposable Gloves

- **SHOWA 6110PF:** Lightweight, ergonomic and incorporating Eco Best Technology, these 100 percent nitrile biodegradable single-use gloves are waterproof, powder-free and latex-free. They feature textured fingertips and are built for comfort during long periods of maintenance or general repair work.
- **SHOWA 6112PF:** Form-fitting, water-resistant and latex-free, these biodegradable gloves feature 4 mil/0.10 mm-thick nitrile and textured fingertips. Unsupported, lightweight and powder-free, they use Eco Best Technology and offer superior comfort in food preparation, laboratory use and maintenance or general repair work.
- **SHOWA 7500PF:** Incorporating a textured finish and Eco Best Technology, these flexible 100 percent nitrile gloves are disposable, biodegradable and silicone-free. Ergonomic and incorporating textured fingertips and a rolled cuff, they increase wearer dexterity, keep dirt out and make wet work safer and easier.

- **SHOWA 7502PF:** Powder-, latex-, and accelerator-free, these biodegradable ambidextrous gloves were designed for users with sensitive skin. They feature textured fingertips and Eco Best Technology. The 2.5 mil/0.06 mm-thick nitrile offers protection from a wide range of chemical hazards.

How would biodegradable PPE benefit your business? Tell us in the comments below.

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