



Safety

Ansell Mends State-of-the-Art Cut Resistance With Touchscreen Compatibility

James Langford | Aug 29, 2024

What happens when machinists wearing traditional safety gloves try to operate a touchscreen equipment controller? Nothing, probably.

And that's a growing problem in the metalworking and manufacturing industries, where touchscreens—popular for their adaptability and easy integration with smart factory technology such as digital twins—are increasingly replacing manual keyboards.

Workers can, of course, remove their gloves to operate the screens, but when that's done often enough by large numbers of employees, it hinders productivity. Additionally, removing gloves even once heightens the odds that users will fail to put them back on, exposing themselves to severe injuries and their employers to costly regulatory fines—all of which make the workaround undesirable.

Safety solutions provider Ansell offers a more permanent solution: its touchscreen-compatible Ultra Lightweight Cut Protection series of gloves.

The most recent addition to the lineup, the HyFlex® 11-581, was introduced in June and uses next-generation yarns to provide six times more cut resistance than gloves made of standard materials, providing superior protection as well as versatility.

"Touchscreen compatibility used to be a luxury," says Jason Kokoszka, the director of the HyFlex portfolio at Iselin, New Jersey-based Ansell. "Over the past five years, it has become a necessity because there's so much automation on manufacturing floors that's operated by touchscreens rather than by keyboards or pushing buttons."



Photo courtesy of Ansell

Click here to shop for the HyFlex® 11-581 on MSCDirect.com.

The gloves feature a thin 21-gauge liner instead of a lower-gauge bulkier material and offer a reinforced thumb crotch as well as shielding from electrostatic discharge. They're rated A6 under standard 105-2024 of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA), meaning they can withstand weight of up to 3,000 grams without cut-through.

Such gloves are among an array of protective gear that U.S. regulators require businesses to provide for certain workers. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Standard **1910.138** specifies that employers must make sure personnel exposed to cuts, burns or toxic substances that can be absorbed through the skin have appropriate hand protection.

The agency imposed \$466,400 for violations of the rule in the year through September 2023, with manufacturing companies responsible for about 68 percent.

'Fighting the Glove'

While the HyFlex® 11-581 guards workers' hands from chafing and abrasion as well as cuts, the qualities that make it stand out from competitors are comfort, breathability and the tactility it provides workers, Ansell says. Those are important because studies have shown that wearers are more likely to take off safety gloves that are uncomfortable or hinder fine-motor skills.

"Another reason why workers take gloves off is that their hands are sweating and as the sweat builds up, it becomes very uncomfortable," Kokoszka says. "Having lightweight breathability is going to reduce some of that sweat. It also reduces the fatigue you experience if you're wearing a glove that doesn't fit properly and leaves you feeling like you're fighting the glove to get your work done. You're going to have the productivity that you're accustomed to having in a bare-handed situation."

Early customers as well as workers who tested the product before its launch were excited by the combination of strong protection with tactility, which is vital in cramped settings such as automobile production lines.

Providing Dexterity for Precision Work

Employees responsible for removing burrs and edges from recently stamped doors and fenders, for instance, ensuring that joins are flush, “need dexterity, but they also need high cut protection,” Kokoszka explains.

Along with stamping, the HyFlex® 11-581 is also well-suited for automotive industry applications such as inspection and heavy maintenance and a variety of tasks in the machinery, equipment and metal fabrication sectors.

Combined with the other models in the Ultra Lightweight Cut Protection series, the glove gives customers the option of choosing the degree of cut resistance needed to accommodate the demands of a wide variety of jobs.

“The gloves are all built on the same chassis, essentially,” Kokoszka says. “Companies can move up and down the cut-protection scale without the glove becoming substantially different. They all have the same types of materials and coatings, the reinforced thumb crotch that provides extra abrasion resistance and touchscreen compatibility.”

How would gloves with touchscreen compatibility help workers in your machine shop? Tell us in the comments below.

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