



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SAFETY GLOVES

2026

IN SAFE HANDS WITH TRAFFI

Choosing the right safety gloves shouldn't be guesswork. From EN standards to glove selection, this guide brings together everything you need to make smarter, safer choices. Safety gloves are worn in thousands of work environments across the world.

Whether you're in construction, facilities management, rail or any hands on environment, the right glove can make all the difference; improving safety, comfort and performance on the job.

When sharp tools, extreme temperatures, or abrasive surfaces are part of the working day, hand protection isn't optional. It's essential. In the UK, 37% of reported non-fatal workplace injuries affect the fingers, hands, wrists, or arm, with 67% of these injuries keeping the employee out of work for more than 7 days.* Protecting your hands protects your livelihood.

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*Source: [Nimble Fins, Workplace Injury Statistics UK 2026](#)



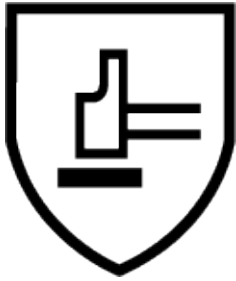
UNDERSTANDING GLOVE MARKINGS

The markings on safety gloves refer to the recognised safety standards that the glove has met, they are designed to help users understand the level of protection the glove offers, making it easier to select the right solution based on the specific hazards present in their working environment.

EN 388:2016+A1:2018 – MECHANICAL RISKS

EN 388:2016 + A1:2018 (EN 388) is the European safety standard that certifies and rates protective work gloves against mechanical risks. Gloves bearing this rating are tested across five specific categories, with higher numbers (and letters) indicating better protection.

- Abrasion: Level 1 to 4
- Coupe Blade Cut Test: Level 1 to 5
- Tear: Level 1 to 4
- Puncture: Level 1 to 4
- Cut Resistance (Based on EN ISO 13997): Level A to-F
- Impact (Optional): Marked with a "P"



[Learn more about each test on page 6](#)

EN 388:2016+A1:2018 – MECHANICAL RISKS

ANSI/ISEA stands for American National Standards Institute/International Safety Equipment Association. This is a US voluntary industry consensus standard only. Similarly to EN 388, ANSI/ISEA 105:2024 classifies glove performance for mechanical hazards (cut, abrasion, puncture), hypodermic needle puncture, chemical performance (where applicable), and impact. The 2024 update standardises labelling via a pentagram pictogram showing abrasion, cut, and puncture levels in one badge.

- ANSI Cut: Level A1 to A9
- ANSI Abrasion: Level 0 to 6
- ANSI Puncture: Level 0 to 5

Not shown on the pictogram:

- ANSI Hypodermic Needle Puncture: Level 0 to 5
- ANSI Impact Protection: Level 1 to 3



CE MARK - CONFORMITY

The CE Mark is a mandatory conformity mark indicating that a product complies with EU health, safety, and environmental protection legislation.

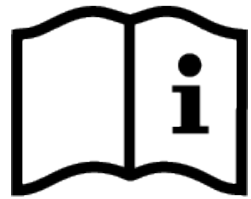


EN ISO 21420:2020

EN ISO 21420:2020 specifies the general requirements and relevant test procedures for glove design and construction, innocuousness, comfort, and efficiency.

The information pictogram indicates the availability of the user information, which consists of:

- Manufacturer's name, trademark, or other identification
- Glove designation
- Size of the glove
- Applicable glove standards and ratings
- Warnings, allergies, care instructions, shelf life, and storage conditions (User Instructions)



EN 511:2006 – COLD PROTECTION

The EN 511:2006 specifies performance requirements and test methods for protection against cold risks. To claim EN 511:2006, gloves must also achieve at least Level 1 in abrasion and tear resistance under EN 388:2016.

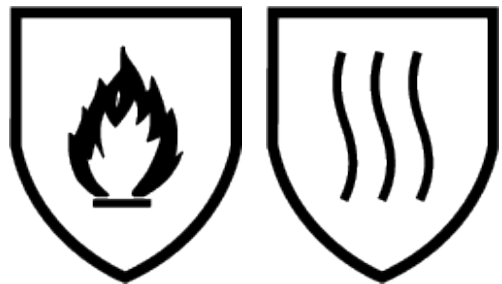
Gloves bearing this rating are tested across three specific categories, with higher numbers indicating better protection.

- Convective Cold: Level 0 to 4
- Contact Cold: Level 0 to 4
- Water Penetration: 0 (Fail) or 1 (Pass)

EN 407:2004 - THERMAL RISKS

The EN 407:2004 standard measures a glove's thermal resistance against six different tests.

- Limited Flame Spread: Level 1 to 4
 - Products claiming flame resistance are marked with the flame icon within the shield pictogram
 - Products with heat protection without flame resistance are marked with the three line icon within the shield pictogram
- Contact Heat: Level 1 to 4
- Convective Heat: Level 1 to 4
- Radiant Heat: Level 1 to 4
- Small Splashed of Molten Metal: Level 1 to 4
- Large Quantities of Molten Metal: Level 1 to 4



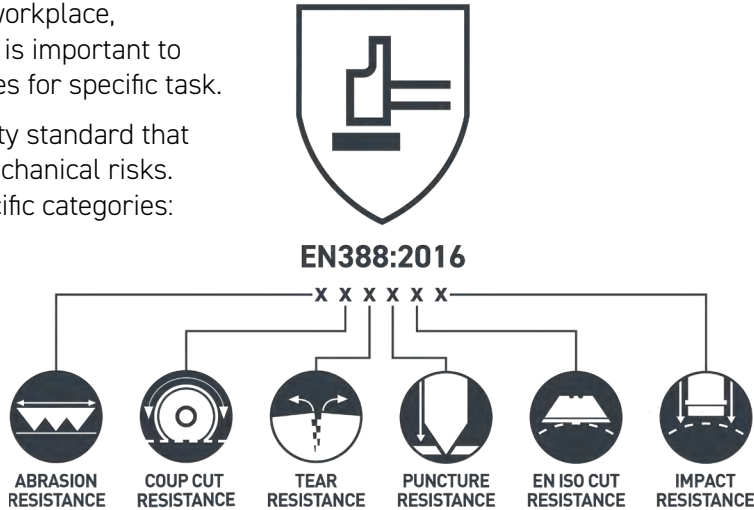
EN 388:2016 + A1:2018

PROTECTIVE GLOVES FOR MECHANICAL RISKS

Hands are exposed to a multitude of hazards in the workplace, including a number of mechanical risks. Therefore, it is important to made right selection of most appropriate safety gloves for specific task.

EN 388:2016 + A1:2018 (EN 388) is the European safety standard that certifies and rates protective work gloves against mechanical risks. Gloves bearing this rating are tested across five specific categories:

- Abrasion: Level 1 to 4
- Coupe Blade Cut Test: Level 1 to 5
- Tear: Level 1 to 4
- Puncture: Level 1 to 4
- EN ISO Cut Resistance: Level A to-F
- Impact (Optional): Marked with a “P”



ABRASION RESISTANCE:

Test samples from the palm are rubbed against 180-grit abrasive paper under constant load using an abrasion tester. The protection level is determined by the number of cycles required to wear through the material, with a higher cycle count indicates higher abrasion resistance. Four samples are tested in this way, with the overall performance level decided by the lowest result.

Abrasion Resistance	Performance Level Rating
100 Cycles	1
500 Cycles	2
2000 Cycles	3
8000 Cycles	4



COUPE CUT RESISTANCE:

Until 2016, the 'Coupe Blade Cut Test' was the standard test method for cut protection. A rotating circular blade cuts the sample taken from the palm at constant speed and load. Results are determined by the number of cycles needed to cut through the sample and calculating the degree of wear on the blade. This is expressed as an index (Levels 1–5), where higher levels indicate greater resistance to cut by a moving blade.

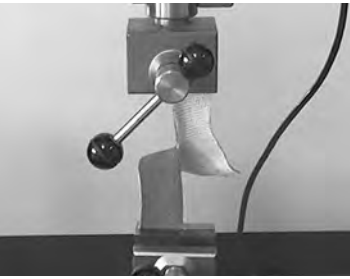
Cut Index	Performance Level Rating
1.2	1
2.5	2
5	3
10	4
20	5



TEAR RESISTANCE:

In the tear resistance test, four samples from the glove's palm are pulled apart on a tensile testing machine. The testing machine' jaws move apart at a speed of 100mm per minute, the force required to propagate the tear determines the performance level (Levels 1–4), with Level 4 indicating the strongest material.

Tear Resistance	Performance Level Rating
10 Newtons	1
25 Newtons	2
50 Newtons	3
70 Newtons	4



For single materials, the level is decided by the lowest result of the four tests. For multiple, unbonded layers, each layer must be tested individually, and the level is based on the lowest individual result of the most tear resistant material.

PUNCTURE RESISTANCE:

Puncture resistance is measured by driving a stylus, the size of a standard roofing nail, through a palm sample at a controlled force. The lowest result of four tests determines the performance level (Levels 1-4), with Level 4 indicating the strongest material.

Puncture Resistance	Performance Level Rating
20 Newtons	1
60 Newtons	2
100 Newtons	3
150 Newtons	4



EN ISO CUT RESISTANCE:

For safety gloves that are created with materials designed to have a blunting effect on blades, additional cut protection tests must be carried out.

Any sample fabric testing used for cut resistance using the 'Coupe Blade Cut Test' which blunts the blade, will be marked with an X and tested using the EN ISO test. This is to ensure the degree of protection provided by the glove is as accurate as possible.

A straight blade cuts the sample at constant speed while force is gradually increased until breakthrough at 20mm cut length. The required force (in Newtons) determines the protection rating A–F, where F denotes the highest cut resistance.

EN 388:2016	A	B	C	D	E	F
	2 Newtons 204gms	5 Newtons 505gms	10 Newtons 1020gms	15 Newtons 1530gms	22 Newtons 2243gms	30 Newtons 3059gms
ASTM/ANSI	ASTM ANSI CUT LEVEL A1	ASTM ANSI CUT LEVEL A2	ASTM ANSI CUT LEVEL A3	ASTM ANSI CUT LEVEL A4	ASTM ANSI CUT LEVEL A5	ASTM ANSI CUT LEVEL A6
	200 - 499 gms to cut	500 - 999 gms to cut	1000 - 1499 gms to cut	1500 - 2199 gms to cut	2000 - 2999 gms to cut	3000 - 3999 gms to cut



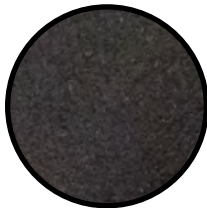
IMPACT RESISTANCE:

Impact test performing at the back of hand by dropping a 2.5kg flat face surface striker from a sufficient height to provide impact energy of 5 joules. The peak force is detected and recorded by a sensor, to pass the test, the transmitted force needs to be less than or equal to 7 kilo newton's with no single results greater than 9 kilo newton's. Readings indicated by letter P (Pass) & F (Fail).

UNDERSTANDING GLOVE COATINGS

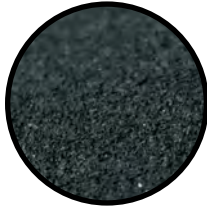
Each coating used in the Traffi product range is designed to deliver an effective combination of grip, durability, and comfort, for protection against hazards encountered in hands on environments.

Understanding the different coatings is an essential aspect of choosing the right glove for your needs.



FOAM NITIRLE

The Foam Nitrile coating features a sponge-like surface which allows the coating to displace moisture effectively, providing great grip in dry, wet, and oily conditions.



SANDY NITIRLE

The Sandy Nitrile coating is string and has a coarse, sand-like surface making it ideal for high-wear environments across dry, wet, and oily environments.



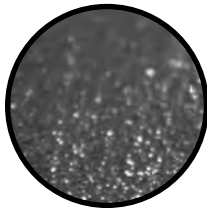
MICRODEX® NITRILE

The MicroDex Nitrile coating is the next-generation variant of the Foam Nitrile coating. With an enhanced sponge-like surface, it allows the coating to effectively displace moisture providing heightened grip in dry, wet, and oily environments, greater control, and longer-term durability than the traditional foam nitrile coating.



WAVY NITRILE

The Wavy Nitrile coating has a wavy surface texture made from 100% nitrile rubber which offers excellent grip in dry, wet, and oily conditions. The wavy texture enables superior abrasion resistance, proving as much as 3x more durable than a traditional foam nitrile coating.



X-DURA FLAT NITRILE

The X-Dura Flat Nitrile coating is highly durable and provides great oil and chemical resistance. It's smooth appearance offers incredible grip in dry conditions and moderate grip in wet conditions. This coating is ideal for highly abrasive environments and high-precision handling.



FOAM NITIRLE

The Foam Nitrile coating features a sponge-like surface which allows the coating to displace moisture effectively, providing great grip in dry, wet, and oily conditions.



X-DURA LATEX

The X-Dura Latex coating features a "crinkle" texture made from natural latex. It provides exceptional grip in wet and dry conditions, and offers strong resistance to tearing and abrasion.

BLENDED COATINGS

Using our expertise in coating blending and polymerisation we blend our leading X-Dura coatings together to create unique characteristics, combining the best properties of each coating.

For example:

The TG5570 features a blend of X-Dura Flat Nitrile and X-Dura Latex to ensure great grip in wet and dry conditions as well as offering thermal and water resistance. Combined with a single layer liner to maintaining good dexterity and comfort.



HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE HAND SAFETY PROGRAMME

Creating an effective hand safety programme is essential for any workplace where employees are exposed to tools, machinery, or hazardous materials. Hands are involved in nearly every task, which makes them particularly vulnerable to injury. A well-structured programme not only helps protect workers from harm but also supports productivity, reduces downtime, and strengthens overall safety culture.

STEP 1: ANALYSIS

The first step in developing a hand safety programme is to carry out a thorough analysis of workplace risks. This involves reviewing incident and injury records to identify patterns and common causes. By understanding what types of injuries are occurring, how they happen, and under what conditions, health and safety professionals can begin to pinpoint the specific hazards employees face. This may include risks linked to manual handling, tool use, machinery, or environmental factors such as wet or cold conditions.

A detailed analysis provides the foundation for making informed decisions and targeting the areas that need the most attention.

As part of this process, it is also important to assess the effectiveness of existing personal protective equipment. If injuries are occurring despite gloves being used, it may indicate that the protection provided is not suitable for the task. Selecting the correct type of glove, based on the specific risks involved, is critical. In some cases, consulting with suppliers or reviewing product specifications can help ensure that workers are equipped with the most appropriate protection.

STEP 2: ACTION

Once risks have been identified, the next step is to take action by implementing clear guidelines and training for the workforce. Employees should understand which gloves to use for different tasks, how to wear them correctly, and how to care for and maintain them. Just as importantly, they should understand why these measures are in place.

To support this, organisations should also focus on raising awareness across the workplace. This can be achieved through regular communication, such as safety briefings, visual reminders, posters, or internal campaigns. Keeping hand safety visible helps reinforce good habits and ensures it remains a priority in day-to-day operations.

STEP 3: MONITOR

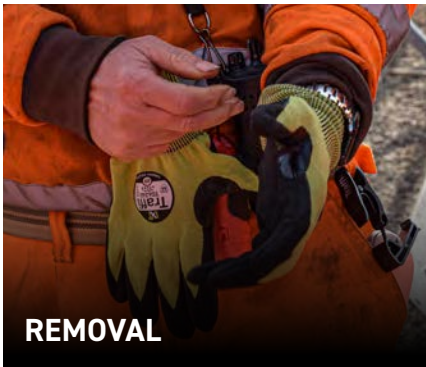
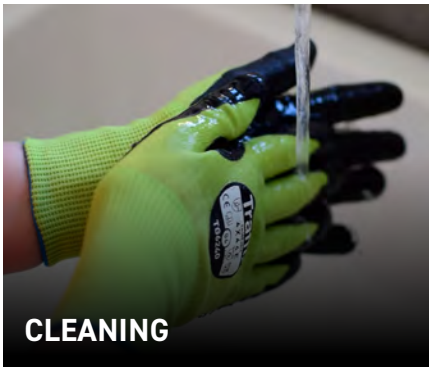
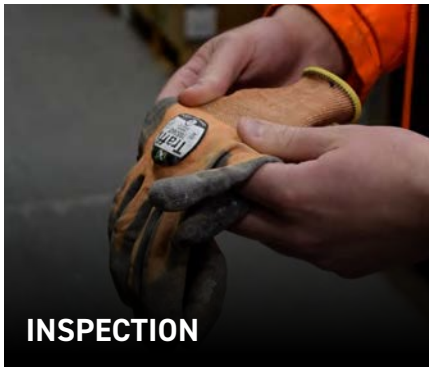
After the programme has been introduced, ongoing monitoring is essential. Regular safety audits, inspections, and checklists can help ensure that procedures are being followed correctly. Providing clear and simple ways for employees to report hazards or concerns is another key element, as it encourages involvement and helps identify issues early. Managers and supervisors play a vital role in this stage by reinforcing expectations and leading by example.

Ultimately, a successful hand safety programme is not a one-time initiative but an ongoing process. By continuously reviewing performance, responding to feedback, and promoting positive behaviours, organisations can create a safer working environment where hand protection becomes second nature. With a structured approach in place, businesses can significantly reduce the risk of injury and ensure their workforce remains protected.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR SAFETY GLOVES

Properly caring for your safety gloves helps them perform as intended, extend their lifespan, and ensure they continue to provide reliable protection when you need it most. From regular inspections to correct cleaning and storage, good glove care plays a vital role in keeping your hands safe on the job.

The three key aspects of glove care are:



INSPECTION

Inspect your gloves daily before use to ensure they are fit for the day's work. Check for manufacturing faults, transit damage, rips, tears, thinning, contamination inside the glove, and any loose threads that could catch in equipment.

Regular inspection helps prevent injuries, avoids unnecessary glove disposal, and saves time and money.

CLEANING

Clean reusable gloves regularly by turning them inside out, rinsing them in tepid water, and allowing them to dry naturally. Avoid using chemicals, as these can damage the coating, and always inspect gloves after washing to ensure the coating remains intact.

Our entire LXT glove range has been certified following laundering to verify the retention of protective performance after washing. This confirms that the gloves maintain their performance levels as well as the functionality following the specified washing process.

The LXT range has also been tested and certified in accordance with the requirements of the EN 388:2016 standard after laundering, ensuring continued compliance with mechanical protection performance requirements.

REMOVAL

After use, wipe or rinse your gloves before removing them, especially if they have been exposed to chemicals. Once clean, remove them carefully and place them in a suitable container to help reduce risk and extend glove life.

START YOUR JOURNEY TO ZERO HAND INJURIES

At Traffi we see a brighter future with zero workplace hand injuries and people using gloves they want to wear, working at peak performance. Guided by innovation, collaboration and care, we partner with customers to deliver gloves that people want to wear, and in turn accelerate their journey to zero hand injuries.



Our pioneering TraffiSystem® makes choosing the right glove for the job simple, visual and effective. Consisting of 3 unique colours, each representing a range of cut levels, simplifying the job of operatives and health and safety managers alike.



SUPPORT BEYOND THE GLOVES

Traffi's support goes beyond the gloves themselves. Our team are on hand to conduct glove surveys, make recommendations based on real site applications, conduct glove trials to gain insight directly from the end users, and provide ongoing site support with Toolbox Talks, awareness posters, dedicated hand safety campaigns, and more.

Looking to start your journey to zero hand injuries?

Contact our team at info@traffi.com





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