



HEALTH, SAFETY,
& ENVIRONMENTAL



SAFETY ALERT

Alert #: SA 30-26

Date: May 25, 2026

Hand Injury During Removal of Packaging from Rigging Strap

Incident Summary

A worker sustained a hand laceration while removing plastic wrapping from a nylon rigging strap. The employee used a box cutter with an exposed blade to cut the packaging. During the task, the blade passed through the worker's glove and into the hand, resulting in an injury.

What Happened?

The investigation determined that the proper cutting tool was not available at the work location. A box cutter was used as a substitute for a safer cutting device such as scissors or a dedicated strap cutter. The worker was cutting away from the body; however, hand positioning and the location of the material created an exposure that was not recognized before the task began.

Key Learnings

- Use the **right tool for the task**. Packaging, straps, and wrapping materials should be cut using approved safety cutters, strap cutters, or scissors - not exposed-blade box cutters.
- Conduct a brief hazard assessment before beginning even routine tasks such as unpacking equipment and materials.
- Keep hands and other body parts out of the blade's travel path.
- Maintain an adequate distance from coworkers and ensure cutting motions are directed away from yourself and others.
- Gloves provide limited protection against direct contact with sharp blades and should never be relied upon as the primary control.

Required Actions

- Verify proper cutting tools are available in toolhouses, gang boxes, and work locations.
- Include unpacking, cutting, and material preparation activities in the JSEA/LIFE process.
- Inspect gloves and ensure appropriate cut-resistant gloves are available where cutting hazards exist.
- Stop work and obtain the correct tool if the approved cutting device is not available.

Safety Reminder

Simple tasks can cause serious injuries when the wrong tool is used. Before making any cut, identify the hazard, position your hands out of the line of fire, and use the proper cutting device. Every cut counts.

Proper use of the **GIS LIFE Processes** can help to create a **FAIL-SAFE** Work Environment.

