

First Aid – Cuts and scrapes*



At work there are many things that can cause a cut or scrape. A cut is defined as an area of severed skin. This could be caused by a laceration (tearing of soft body tissue) or a puncture wound. A scrape or abrasion is a type of open wound that is caused by skin rubbing against a rough surface. If left untreated, cuts and scrapes can lead to infections.

Why is it important?

The Workers Compensation Act (WCA) requires that all workers report to their employer as soon as practicable the nature and cause of an injury or disease. This includes cuts and scrapes.

Employers must provide first aid services to their workers and keep treatment records. Some cuts and scrapes do end up as a WorkSafeBC claim. For example, there were 6,595 laceration claims from 2017-2021 caused by the use of non-powered hand tools, mainly knives.



Associated risks/hazards

If cuts and scrapes are not treated, they can lead to infections. Signs of infection can include redness, swelling, increased pain, and pus draining from the wound. If left untreated, this can lead to sepsis. Sepsis is the body's extreme response to an infection. It is a life-threatening medical emergency.

Preventive next steps

Develop safe work procedures (SWP) which include hazards of the job, personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements and step-by-step instructions. Training workers on these SWPs is a great first step to preventing cuts and scrapes.

Using the appropriate PPE (e.g., cut resistant gloves) when using a knife to prevent cuts and scrapes.

Keeping your body parts out of the line of fire will also prevent cuts and scrapes e.g., shutdown and lockout a machine before servicing it.

When you do get a cut and scrape at work, you need to report this to your employer and get treatment.

The first aid attendant will tend to your wounds and fill out a first aid record. Keep an eye on the wound for signs of infection and change the bandages as needed.

If the cut or scrape is not getting better and/or there are signs of infection, seek medical aid from a medical professional. Make sure to tell them it is a work-related injury.

If you have not already, consider getting a tetanus shot to help prevent infections. ImmunizeBC recommends tetanus vaccine may also be given to people with serious cuts or deep wounds if their last tetanus vaccine was given more than 5 years ago.



For additional resources visit:

[First Aid Record \(external\) \(form 55B23\)](#) WorkSafeBC

[Worker obligation to give notice of injury or disease to employer](#) WCA Part 4 Section 149

[Occupational First Aid](#) OHSR Part 3 Sections 3.14-3.21

[Tetanus](#) Immunize BC

