



Automotive

Motor Vehicle Manufacturing: Supporting A Successful Safety Program

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Automotive industry, a pillar of America's economic strength, continues to demonstrate steady growth with rising employment numbers. According to the BLS, employment within the motor vehicles and parts manufacturing segment alone has grown 5% from September 2021 to September 2022, totaling approximately 1,003,300 domestic workers, which means increased demand for PPE.

According to the BLS, workers in the motor vehicle manufacturing and assembly industry suffer approximately 6.3 nonfatal injuries per 100 full-time workers, making safety an important facet of the manufacturing side of the business. To address this, PIP® has taken the time to capture the "voice of the customer" and highlight a few key trends, features and considerations that have proven to support a successful safety program for large motor vehicle manufacturing companies.

- U.S. COMPANIES **VALUE** U.S.-MADE PRODUCTS

Companies with U.S. manufacturing roots value U.S.-made safety products for several reasons. For one, purchasing USA-made safety products supports the sustainability and expansion of domestic jobs, further stimulating the economy and aiding in overall economic growth. Another clear upside to choosing USA-made safety products is the **availability**, which has proven to be a concern of many large companies that had to navigate through supply chain issues faced throughout the pandemic. Because of this, PIP® brands like **Kut Gard®** (cut-resistant sleeves and gloves manufactured in America) have been implemented and trusted by select Honda, Tesla, Toyota and Drive Automotive manufacturing facilities, along with many other automotive giants with manufacturing facilities on U.S. soil.

- THERE ARE **ADVANTAGES** TO UNCOATED WORK GLOVES

We have all heard it when it comes to hand protection, "grip is the first line of defense." In many cases, this is true. So why are automotive manufacturers still using **uncoated cut-resistant work gloves**? Early in the automotive manufacturing process, inspectors and other workers will usually handle stamped pieces of metal with sharp edges. Typically, the stamped metal is hot to the touch, meaning both cut and burn hazards are present. Throughout the following month, week or in some cases, day, workers will likely experience glove wear (often to only one glove), whether it be a tear, burn through or general wear of the fibers and fabric that make up the protective shell. In these instances, uncoated knit gloves prove to be beneficial by being interchangeable, meaning a single glove can be disposed of and

replaced due to its ambidextrous property.

Uncoated knit gloves are also easily launderable, prolonging the use of the glove and eliminating the bacteria, germs and sweat that build up throughout the workday. Coated gloves may have laundering limitations due to coating degradation concerns.

- **CUSTOMIZED SLEEVES ADDRESS *TAILORED* SAFETY GOALS**

When it comes to protection past the wrist in the automotive industry, a one-solution-for-all approach will simply not do. Building a successful safety program for specific manufacturing plants requires pinpointing the unique hazards and pain points workers are facing and implementing catered solutions. To address this, PIP® has been able to *knit custom combinations of yarns* in the U.S. that combat specific combinations of hazards including cuts from handling stamped products, heat from robotic weld operations, abrasion from diecasting or arc flash from battery manufacturing. The ability to combine blends of yarns into one product has resulted in multi-faceted solutions that perform beyond just mechanical protection and meet the exact specifications companies demand out of their safety products. These “beyond just mechanical protection” features include yarns designed to keep workers *cool* and *moving freely* all while sustaining the quality of the product by limiting tears and *stains* that result from performing demanding jobs on the floor.

Other available features include customized finger and thumb styles, as well as top-of-arm options intended to keep sleeves fitting properly at both the top of the arm and base of the hand.

- **SUSTAINABILITY IS A FOCUS MOVING FORWARD**

It's not a myth; most major automotive manufacturers have published sustainability goals with the intentions of full implementation by 2025. The three main issues at hand that companies are looking to address include climate change and carbon emissions, digital responsibility and *sustainability along the value chain*. Sustainability along the value chain is based on the principle of reusing and recycling resources, including the PPE used in plants. PIP® has developed several products featuring *bio-based* and *recycled fiber technologies* aimed at reducing users' carbon footprint.

As this initiative develops, large automotive companies will begin to explore safety products that are eco-friendly but, maybe more importantly, recyclable after use. PIP® is among the first to introduce a *true recycling program* for customers who want to go the extra mile in ensuring that consumed PPE (gloves, ear plugs, eyewear) is recycled instead of filling up municipal dumps.

- **LESS SOURCING WITH A HEAD-TO-TOE SAFETY PARTNER**

You see it in all aspects of business and life; consolidation leads to less partial attention lent in many areas and more targeted attention lent towards one. This is no different when sourcing and implementing safety products. Automotive manufacturing plants and their distributors have been working together to find a reliable head-to-toe safety partner resulting in less time sourcing and more time doing what's important, keeping workers safe with compliant, comfortable and on-time safety solutions. PIP® is a one-stop-shop for motor vehicle manufacturing companies looking to implement highly sought after safety solutions including *anti-fog safety eyewear*, *hearing protection* that still allows for effective communication, logoed *bump caps*, customized *hand and arm protection solutions* and much more.

From casting to metal fab to assembly to paint, PIP® has *application-specific safety products* that can help support a successful safety program for large automotive manufacturing companies. If you are a safety professional looking to optimize your safety program and meet annual goals, be sure to *reach out to your PIP® sales representative* today.

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