



ANSI/ISEA 138 FAQ



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Confused by the new back of hand impact protection standard? Chris Meadows, Chair of the ISEA Hand Protection Committee, and Rodney Taylor, Vice-President of the International Glove Association, have put together a list of the most frequently asked questions they've heard on the standard since being involved in its creation.

Which companies participated in the work group to develop the new standard?

Members of ISEA's Hand Protection Group include: D3O, Ansell, Bob Dale Gloves, Conney Safety Products, DSM Dyneema, DuPont Personal Protection, Ergodyne, Global Glove, HexArmor, Honeywell Safety Products, Ironwear, Kimberly-Clark Professional, Lakeland Industries, Magid Glove and Safety, Majestic Glove, MCR Safety, National Safety Apparel, OccuNomix International, Protective Industrial Products, Pyramex Safety, Radians, Saf-T-Gard International, Superior Glove, Wells Lamont Industrial, and World Fibers.

The ANSI/ISEA 138 standard was drafted by a smaller work group composed of D3O (work group Chair), MCR Safety, Majestic Glove, Hexarmor, Ansell, Ergodyne and Mechanix Wear. Input was also provided by a Dr. Lloyd Champagne - a surgeon who specializes in hand injuries.

How many gloves manufacturers are making an ANSI/ISEA 138 claim today?

The standard was released in February 2019. Yet, several manufacturers already have ANSI/ISEA 138 compliant gloves available (MCR Safety, Superior Glove Works, and Majestic Glove to name a few).

We are likely to see more and more glove manufacturers joining this space as end-users demand compliant product. End-users are the ultimate source of demand and should not hesitate to request products that are compliant with industry standards from their distributors.

What drives impact performance? Thickness or material?

Impact protection performance is a result of both geometry and material composition. Generic 'TPR', no matter how thick, will have limited performance threshold. Innovative materials, like D3O, can provide huge increases in impact performance without requiring significant mass/thickness increases. The ideal solution considers both thickness and material composition.



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Has anyone completed a survey of impact performance?

D3O has conducted its own analysis of the performance landscape. Our analysis indicates that the bulk of the products we tested are either non-compliant or Level 1. There are a limited set in which meet Level 2 and very few products meet Level 3. D3O are not aware of anyone else who is completing this analysis.

Are companies that didn't participate in the work group going to be behind in developing compliant products?

Commercial timing is a function of many factors beyond just access to information about the requirements of the ISEA 138 standard, but it does appear that ISEA members have been some the first to market with ISEA 138 compliant products.

Are Level 3 products going to offer lower dexterity?

Generally speaking, there is an inverse relationship between protection and comfort that is why it will be critical for material suppliers, like D3O, to develop new and innovative materials that can reduce or potentially eliminate this trade-off. Current back of hand solutions – particularly TPR are often merely decorative – ISEA 138 will force back of hand materials to build in performance features. D3O are pleased to offer the thinnest, most flexible products that meet Level 3.

Are compliant products going to be more expensive?

The primary objective of this standard is to reduce injuries – a marginal increase in price could be well worth the direct and indirect cost of an injury.

How do end-users keep suppliers honest?

In this regard, there are advantages to buying from an ISEA member company. The ISEA has a level of self-regulation to avoid gamesmanship. Separately, this is where a material supplier can be extremely valuable. We can complete limited impact testing to validate performance; please reach out to D3O at sales@d3o.com for more information on this service.

Standards vs Regulations – when will the US adopt a governmental compliance model like Europe?

Likely never – even if the government were to mandate this, it would take years to execute. The burden in North America will continue to fall on end-users to write effective safety SOP's.