



Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Using Hand Tools Safely

Your tools enable you to perform your job. When they aren't in proper working order, or when you don't handle them properly, you can't perform your job. That means that you might be endangering yourself or others.

Before handling any tool, whether it was furnished by the company or by you, check to see that the tool has been maintained in a safe condition. Personnel assigned to tool rooms are responsible for the inspection and repair of tools under their control. But if a tool you are using isn't in proper working order, report it immediately.

Hammers, wrenches, chisels, pliers, screwdrivers, and other hand tools are often underrated as sources of potential danger. Hand tools may look harmless, but they are the cause of many injuries. In fact, an estimated 8 percent of all workplace compensable injuries are caused by incidents associated with hand tools. These injuries can be serious, including loss of fingers or eyesight.

Hand tools can cause many types of injuries:

- Cuts, abrasions, amputations, and punctures: If hand tools are designed to cut or move metal and wood, remember what a single slip can do to fragile human flesh.
- Repetitive motion injuries: Using the same tool in the same way all day long, day after day, can stress human muscles and ligaments. Carpal tunnel syndrome (inflammation of the nerve sheath in the wrist) and injuries to muscles, joints, and ligaments are increasingly common if the wrong tool is used, or the right tool is used improperly. Injury from continuous vibration can also cause numbness or poor circulation in hands and arms.
- Eye injuries: Flying chips of wood or metal are a common hazard, often causing needless and permanent blindness.
- Broken bones and bruises: Tools can slip, fall from heights, or even be thrown by careless employees, causing severe injuries. A hammer that falls from a ladder is a lethal weapon.

To avoid such injuries, remember the following safety procedures:

1. Use the right tool for the job. Don't use your wrench as a hammer. Don't use a screwdriver as a chisel, etc. Go back to the tool house and get the right tool in the right size for the job.
2. Don't use broken or damaged tools, dull cutting tools, or screwdrivers with worn tips.
3. Cut in a direction away from your body.
4. Make sure your grip and footing are secure when using large tools.
5. Carry tools securely in a tool belt or box. Don't carry tools up ladders. Use a hoist or rope.
6. Keep close track of tools when working at heights. A falling tool can kill a co-worker.
7. Pass a tool to another person by the handle; never toss it.
8. Use the right personal protective equipment (PPE) for the job. Follow company instructions for selecting and using safety eyewear, steel toed shoes, gloves, hard hats, etc.



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9. Never carry sharp or pointed tools such as a screwdriver in your pocket.
10. Select ergonomic tools for your work task when movements are repetitive and forceful.
11. Be on the lookout for signs of repetitive stress. Early detection might prevent a serious injury.
12. Always keep your tools in top condition. A dull blade or blunt point can lead to injury.
13. Store tools properly when you stop work.

Think about tool safety each and every time you begin a job, and you'll perform your job safely and effectively. Those are your hands that are being extended by the pliers or the screwdriver. Treat your tools as carefully as you treat your hands.

Use safety as a vital tool...at work it's the "Golden Rule"!!



