



# Weekly Safety Meeting

Your Safety Is Our Business®

Volume 4 – Issue 51

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## Worksite Safety – Power Tools

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Accidents involving portable power tools happen all the time. You've all heard of cases where a chip flew off a drill and hit someone's eye or of someone getting a shock because a tool had a faulty ground. And then there's the person who lost a finger because the guard on the circular saw did not return. In one recent year, there were more than 800 OSHA citations for violations of power tools standards (both general industry and construction), with penalties totaling well over half a million dollars. There are more than 100,000 hospital emergency room visits each year in the United States due to power tools accidents.

In California alone, power tool injuries cause more than 1,500 injuries each year that result in lost workdays.

In some ways, portable power tool accidents are more serious than those associated with stationary machines because:

- Portable power tools are difficult to guard completely.
- They're mobile, so they run a greater risk of coming in contact with the user's body.
- They are easily dropped and damaged, so there's a risk of them being used when faulty.
- The power source (electrical, hydraulic, etc.) comes in close contact with the operator.

If you've ever actually witnessed a power tool injury, you don't forget it. Knowing how to work safely with power tools – saws, drills, sanders, grinders, etc. – is an extremely serious topic, because injuries from power tool accidents can be severe and permanent.

According to the Power Tool Institute, a trade group, there are three main reasons most such injuries happen:

- Loss of concentration – operators can stop paying attention to their work if they repeat the same actions with a power tool over and over again;
- Unexpected events – a kickback or other sudden problem with a fast-moving power tool can be very dangerous, especially if the operator does not have the experience to expect the unexpected; or
- Inexperience and overconfidence – it's a hazardous combination if the operator doesn't know the importance of being careful at all times when using a power tool.

### Portable power tools safe work procedures:

1. Use tools and extension cords with a 3-wire plug for grounding. If the tool only has two prongs, make sure the label on the tool specifies "double insulated." If the tool has neither, don't use it.
2. Check the tool and cord before each use to ensure safe conditions.



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- a. Should you find a defect, such as missing parts or guards, cracked frame, damaged cord insulation or plug, you should turn the defective tool in to your supervisor for repair by a qualified electrician or replacement.
  - b. If the tool will be left in the work place for a period of time, attach a “Do Not Use” tag to the cord.
3. When making adjustments (such as changing blades or bits) or repairs to power tools, ALWAYS disconnect the power first.
4. When using power tools in a wet or damp area, use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and elevate the cords out of the water.
  - a. GFCIs should be placed on the end of the extension cord at the outlet, so that the extension cord as well as you are monitored and protected.
  - b. Also, be aware of standing in puddles of water when using the equipment.
5. When elevating extension cords to avoid wet conditions, do not use wire that will cut into the insulation or lay across sharp edges. Rope, twine, or padding is less abrasive.
6. Do not run extension cords through windows or doors that could accidentally be closed on the cord, pinching the insulation and resulting in damage or shock.
  - a. Do not place cords in walkways or traffic areas where they can cause tripping hazards and possibly be damaged.
7. When unplugging tools and cords, remove by pulling the plug, not by pulling the cord, which can cause damage to the cord, plug, and outlet.
8. When using temporary lights, make sure the guard or reflector is in place to prevent accidental contact with the bulb.
  - a. Do not suspend by the cord unless it is designed and approved for such use.

## Remember:

Electricity is an unseen killer; it gives no warning. But electrical shock can be avoided by using tools in good condition and common sense.

**Don't be a fool! Inspect your...electrical tools!!**



