



Weekly Safety Meeting

Utility Knife Safety

There's one hand tool that demands your respect over many others in the workplace, a tool that can cut you to the bone in an instant... the utility knife.

Many workers use utility knives to cut drywall, strapping, puncture shrink-wrap, and open packaging. But one wrong move and these retractable blades can do serious harm.

Many injuries attributed to manual workshop tools in the US involve knives with retractable blades.

Accidents Involving Utility Knives Occur for the Following Reasons:

- Drawing the knife towards you instead of away from your body;
- Working with a dull blade that requires more pressure, increasing the potential for injury;
- Trying to cut more than the knife can handle;
- Improperly storing the knife with the blade extended;
- Failing to wear personal protective equipment; and
- Neglecting to inspect the tool before use.

Problems also arise when some employees don't have or can't find a utility knife supplied by the company. As a result, they tend to use whatever is handy, such as a pocketknife or other tool with a sharp edge. This can quickly turn hazardous if the tool slips or is used incorrectly.

There have been cases where workers have suffered injuries from an exposed blade tip. This is because the blade did not completely retract into the handle. That's why it's important for workers to use the proper size blade or replace a defective retraction mechanism. Some companies use self-retracting utility knives – the blade automatically retracts into the handle when not in use.

Safety Precautions to Keep in Mind When Using Utility Knives:

- Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes in case a blade breaks;
- Always use a sharp blade;
- Wear metal mesh gloves to protect your hands;
- Hand a utility knife to a co-worker with the handle first;
- Use only self-retracting blades;
- Ensure the blades are properly positioned in the handle before use;
- Keep extremities out of the cutting path;
- Don't apply too much pressure on the blade;

- Follow manufacturer's instructions when changing blades. Don't use utility knives to pry objects loose; and
- Dispose of dull or broken blades in a puncture-resistant container.

Many manual tool injuries have been attributed to utility knives like box cutters. Because blades need to be sharp to work effectively, they can also deliver dangerous cuts. Improper use or handling could result in a slip and you could be injured.

ONE SLIP COULD MEAN STICHES!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

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