

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Hand Tool Safety



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

HAND TOOL INJURIES OCCUR IN MANY DIFFERENT TYPES-

- Cuts, abrasions, amputations and punctures - Hand tools that are designed to move wood or metal can cause any one of these injuries if there is a slipup.
- Using the same tool with the same method all day long in repetitive motions can cause ligament and muscle stress. Also, another trait of repetitive motion is that the method and motions become "rote" (doing so we tend to feel that they become automatic). Then, we get careless and lose focus on the task and that is the prime time for an accident.
- Eye injuries - Flying chips of wood or metal are also a common hazard, which sometimes causes needless and permanent damage.
- Broken bones and bruises - Tools can slip, fall from heights, or even be thrown by careless employees and cause severe injuries. A hammer falling from heights, like from a ladder, becomes a lethal weapon.
- Severed body parts from table saws.
- Using the wrong tool or a broken or damaged tool is a hazard looking for a place to happen.

BEFORE YOU USE A TOOL-

- ✓ Check the area to make sure that there is no one around that could get hurt.
- ✓ Be sure that you have sufficient lighting.
- ✓ Inspect the tools for rust, wear or cracks, check that the handles are tight and secure and are free of oil and grease. Check to see that hinges move freely and that you have sharp blades.
- ✓ Do not use a broken or damaged tool.

DO-

- ❖ *Stay Alert when using hand tools.*
- ❖ *Make sure that you have enough light.*

SAFE USE OF HAND TOOLS-

- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when using hand tools. Depending on your work project, this may include a face shield or safety goggles, gloves or other types of PPE.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, socks and sturdy shoes with non-slip soles. Don't wear loose clothing that could get caught in a tool. If you wear long hair, tie it back behind the ears and keep your shirt tucked in.
- Always use the right tool for the job.
- Don't use greasy or oily tools without first cleaning them up for safety as well as good hygiene or attempt to use a tool that is too heavy for you to handle.
- Plant your feet firmly and don't lose your ground.
- Cut or chip away from your body.
- Take scheduled breaks and avoid repetitive jobs for long periods of time

CARRYING AND STORING TOOLS-

- Refrain from carrying tools with sharp edges or points in your pockets.
- Carry your tools in a toolbox or tool belt.
- Don't carry tools so that they block or obstruct your vision.
- Clean up your tools after using them. Be sure that any guards, shields or other safety devices are in place before you store them.
- Store all your tools in a dry and secure location. Don't leave them out on a workbench or any place where someone could injure themselves with them.
- Store tools with sharp points and edges separate from other tools.
- When you're working on a ladder, do not descend or ascend it with an armload of tools. Send the tools up to them or down with a rope and pulley.

DON'T-

- ❖ *Carry tools in your hands when ascending or descending a ladder or steep stairways.*
- ❖ *Ever throw a tool or participate in "horseplay" when using a tool.*
- ❖ *Expose a tool to extreme heat or place it near moving machinery.*

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Excerpts. www.toolboxtopics.com
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