

HAND & POWER TOOL SAFETY

Hand and power tools cause many workplace injuries. Hammers, pliers, wrenches, drills, saws and other tools, when misused or improperly maintained, cause serious injuries, including amputations, burns, silicosis and the loss of eyesight. Tools can slip from the hand or fall from heights, and materials ejected from them can strike the eyes or body. Not wearing the right personal protective equipment when using tools significantly increases the chance of injury.

Improperly used tools can cause cuts, abrasions and “struck by” injuries. Substituting a screw-driver for a chisel may result in its tip breaking and flying. Using a hammer with a loose, splintered, or cracked wooden handle may cause it to break and strike its user or another employee. Using the right tool and inspecting it prior to its use helps prevent accidents.

Electrically powered tools present additional risks. Shocks and burns from an improperly grounded tool, or making contact with exposed wiring, may result in electrocution or severe injuries. Workers can be seriously injured or killed from shocks that cause them to fall from ladders and elevated work surfaces.

Powered tools can generate harmful silica dust when cutting or drilling in stone or concrete. OSHA mandates that employers implement protective measures to limit exposure to this deadly hazard.

Inspecting hand and power tools before each use helps prevent injuries

- Do impact tools such as chisels and punches have mushroomed heads?
- Are knife or saw blades kept sharp?
- Are wooden handles free of splinters and cracks? Are they secured tight within the tool?
- Are electrical power tools properly grounded with a third prong or double insulation?
- Are electrical cords free of tears or other damage?
- Immediately remove broken or defective tools from the work area.



- Is the work area free of clutter – boards, debris, tools, etc. – that present tripping hazards?
- Are floors clean and dry?
- Are employees wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment?



Follow Recommended Tool Safety Practices

- Use the right tool for the job.
- Ensure you have a good grip and footing when using tools.
- Cut in a direction away from your body.
- Support the material you are working on by putting it on a stable surface and securing it with a clamp or vise.
- Never carry sharp or pointed tools in your pocket. Use a tool belt or box.
- Never tamper or remove guards on power tools and machinery.
- Keep tools safe and organized in secure and dry storage areas.
- Carry an adequate inventory of replacement parts for power tools and machinery.
- Maintain tools according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Tools may require sharpening and oiling on a regular basis.

