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Safety Focused



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Hand Tool Safety

A variety of workplace tasks require the use of hand tools. However, such tools can create significant safety hazards without proper precautions in place. In fact, according to recent research from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), nearly 10% of all workplace injuries are caused by hand tool incidents.

The incorrect or unsafe use of hand tools can lead to a wide range of potential injuries, including:

- Cuts, abrasions, amputations and puncture wounds
- Eye injuries caused by flying objects or particles
- Bruises, fractures and broken bones

Fortunately, you can help prevent these injuries by upholding the following hand tool safety guidelines:

- **Select the correct tool.** Make sure you are using the right tool for the task at hand. Further, ensure you are properly trained and qualified to use that tool. If you are ever unsure of how to operate a tool or which tool to utilize for a task, ask your supervisor.

- **Use personal protective equipment (PPE).** Be sure to wear all necessary PPE when using hand tools. This may include gloves, safety eyewear, steel-toed shoes and a hard hat.
- **Keep tools secure.** Don't be careless about transporting or storing hand tools. Carry tools in a toolbox or belt—never in your pockets. Keep track of tools at all times while they are in use. When you are finished using a tool, store it in a safe and secure location.
- **Ensure safe operation.** Follow the manufacturer's instructions to confirm safe usage of a tool. Always maintain a solid grip, comfortable posture and proper footing when using a hand tool.
- **Conduct regular maintenance.** Keep hand tools in good condition through routine maintenance. Never use a broken or damaged tool.

If you have any additional questions regarding hand tool safety, consult your supervisor.



Best Practices for Shoveling Snow

When winter arrives—often bringing low temperatures and snowfall with it—the seasonal transition may require you to start periodically shoveling snow. Although this task is necessary to help clear pathways and prevent ice buildup, shoveling snow comes with serious safety risks.

After all, repeated shoveling requires significant physical exertion, which—when paired with the frigid outdoor elements—can take a dangerous toll on your body. The most common complications that can accompany shoveling snow include sprains and strains, hypothermia, frostbite and even cardiac arrest.

That's why it's crucial to utilize proper precautions while you shovel snow. Consider these best practices:

- Always check the weather before working outdoors to properly prepare yourself. Try to limit your time shoveling if weather conditions are extremely cold, wet or windy.
- Make sure you dress appropriately for the task at hand. Wear several loose layers of clothing, a warm hat that fully covers your head and ears, mittens (rather than gloves) and thick socks that will keep your feet dry.
- Avoid shoveling immediately after eating or while smoking.
- Take a few minutes to stretch before you begin shoveling to better prepare your body for the physical demands of the task.
- Try to push the snow instead of lifting it. If you must lift snow while shoveling, use a smaller shovel or only partially fill your shovel with snow to avoid lifting too much at a time. In addition, remember to lift with your legs rather than your back.
- Pay attention to how you feel while you shovel—never work to the point of exhaustion. If you begin to feel overly fatigued, stop shoveling and inform your supervisor.
- When handling large amounts of snow, consider utilizing a snowblower rather than a shovel to avoid the extra labor. However, make sure you are properly trained to do so. Always consult your supervisor before making any equipment changes.

Your safety is our first priority. Talk to your supervisor if you have any further questions or concerns about shoveling snow.