

SAFETY TALK

Hand and Power Tool Safety

Countless occupational finger and hand injuries are caused by hand and power tools each year. Most of these injuries can be attributed to improper use and maintenance of tools. Fortunately, following some basic safety tips can help you prevent these incidents from occurring.

Whenever using hand or power tools always follow any and all manufacturer recommendations. Only use tools as they are intended to be used. Never modify a tool to do something other than what it was designed for.

Always inspect hand and power tools before every use. Keep in mind that your supervisor has the authority to remove any tool deemed unfit for the job site, regardless of whether you or the company owns the tool. If you observe any damage to a tool, tag it immediately and remove it from service.



When using tools like chisels and punches make sure they are not mushroomed or cracked. If they are, do not use them and remove them from service. You may only use them again if they are repaired by a qualified professional.

Do not attempt to use a wrench if it has damaged jaws. Never use shims to make a wrench fit. Never use lengths of pipe to extend the handle of a wrench.

It is important that you use the right tool for the job.

When using electric tools, make sure that the plug is three pronged or double insulated. Never remove the third prong from a grounded tool as it is important to maintain contact with the ground. Do not use electric tools near flammable or combustible objects.

When raising and/or lowering tools, they must be contained in approved tool bucket or attached to a hand line. Do not leave tools unattended in elevated or aerial positions. When storing hand and power tools make sure that you have the protected guard in place if it has one. Saws, axes, knives and similar tools typically come equipped with protective guards for storage.

Finally, never use metal tools such as hammers, tape measures or screwdrivers near any energized circuits.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What should you do if a chisel or punch becomes mushroomed or cracked?

Why should you never remove a third prong from the plug of a power tool?

