



Toolbox Talks

More Tool Safety Part 1

Table Saws

We all recognize how important our hands are to our employability. However, every year, hundreds of fingers & hands are lost to table saws. Table saws are the surest & cleanest way to lose a finger or a hand. Much of this is a result of getting used to operating a table saw & then losing respect for it.

Two common types of saws: •Table Saw •Radial Arm Saw

General Operating Rules:

- **Never operate without all guards in place, especially the blade guard.**
- Be sure you stand in the correct position—always allow for kick back.
- **Maintain good footing.**
- Never allow other workers to work or rest when they are exposed to kick back.
- **Maintain good housekeeping in the saw area.**
- Never use your hands to run lumber through the blade or to clean off sawdust. Get a pushstick & a brush.
- **Never use a saw with a dull blade. (Note: When you go to change a blade, make sure the power is disconnected & you control the switch.)**
- Don't crowd (i.e., pinch) a blade, especially when cross-cutting.
- **Don't wear loose clothing around a saw.**
- Always wear eye protection.
- **Be wary of warped lumber.**
- Be wary of "fly back" (also called kick back) when ripping.
- **Keep the blade set so it just barely makes the desired cut.**

Remember: The use of table saws can greatly increase productivity. But if

Wrenches

Wrenches—a very good name for this tool in that all too often it is the condition of a worker's back after misusing a wrench. (Wrenched back, get it?) However, it is not only a back that can be injured...

Proper Care:

•**Inspect on a regular basis** •Replace sprung jaws, cages, & faces •**Replace all bent handles** •Keep the jaws sharp •**Keep the wrench clean & free of grease and oil.**

Proper Use:

•**Always use the proper size wrench for the job.** •Never use a shim to make a wrong size wrench fit a nut. •**Never use a piece of pipe on the handle to increase your leverage. (Slip hazard.)** •Don't use a wrench as a substitute for a hammer •**Don't pound on a wrench to try to loosen a frozen bolt. Use penetrating oil.** •Always pull a wrench toward you—never push away. (Slip hazard.) •**See that the wrench jaws are sharp and can bite the nut.** •Avoid possible falls—be sure you have firm footing.

Remember: After you have several banged up knuckles or a busted finger because of improper use of a wrench, you have learned the hard way that a wrench is dangerous.

Electric Power Tools

The use of portable electric power tools is one of the most common occurrences on any construction project today. Workers are exposed to the use of these tools constantly. It is important to remember that electricity always seeks a path of least resistance, & often, that is through a defective cord into the worker's body. This is especially true if the worker is exposed to wet weather or has been sweating.

The following safety rules should be reviewed when discussing the safe use of portable electric tools:

- **Use only equipment that is in good condition.**
- Be sure the tool is properly grounded.
- **Always report the following:**
 - Defective or broken cords
 - Bad connections to power terminals
 - Defective or broken plugs
 - Defective or loose switches
 - Brushes causing sparks
- Never overstrain the tool thus overloading the motor.
- **Never use an un-insulated tool without a grounding plug.**
- Never adjust the tool when it is plugged in.
- **Disconnect the tool when finished or when not using.**
- Maintain good housekeeping.
- **Never carry the tool by its cord.**
- Avoid working in wet areas unless a ground fault interrupter circuit is used. When you do, wear insulating materials such as rubber gloves or a rubber vest.
- **Never use a tool in the presence of flammable vapors or gases unless it is designed for such use.**
- Always use proper personal protective equipment:
 - Safety glasses or goggles
 - Hard hat
 - Safety shoes
- **Remove dangerous items:**
 - Loose clothing
 - Jewelry

Remember: Electricity is an unseen killer; it gives no warning. But electrical shock can be avoided by using tools in good condition & common sense. Electric power tools come in all shapes & sizes & are designed to do almost anything. However, there are some things that they all have in common, rules for safe & proper use. Each tool is designed to perform a specific function. **As long as you use the right tool & keep it in good operating condition, the various electric power tools will serve you well.** When you begin to improvise, expect the unexpected—injuries.

Remember: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!



Toolbox Talks

More Tool Safety Part 2

Nails

You would think that discussing nails is not a very important subject. However, by one industry estimate, about 20% of all minor injuries on the job are a result of punctures, scrapes, & cuts resulting from nails that were not properly removed from lumber & other debris. We all recognize what can happen if a nail is not properly set before driving it, yet we often forget about how dangerous a nail is once it becomes a part of scrap lumber or job debris.

Driving Nails: ·Be sure your hammer is in good condition. ·Always hit the nail squarely, especially on the first blow. ·Always hit with the blows, 90 degrees to the nail head. ·Make sure the back swing is unobstructed; claws can hurt. ·Be consistent—“groove” your swing. ·Concentrate on the head of the nail.

Pulling Nails: ·Always pull or bend nails when stripping. ·Use the right pulling device for the job. ·If needed, use a block of wood as a fulcrum. It will make the job much easier. ·Keep scrap materials in neat piles & out of walkways. ·Carefully discard used nails.

Remember: Nails can become “snake fangs” if used improperly. Always treat nails with the respect due them. Otherwise you may end up with puncture wounds, scrapes, cuts, or potentially, the loss of your eyesight. Driving & pulling nails is often common sense; use it.

Chisels & Hammers

One of the most common causes of hand injuries is from the improper use of hammers & chisels. Both are responsible for a high number of eye injuries as a result of flying nails, metal, or concrete chips.

Chisel Use: ·Never use a chisel with a mushroomed head. ·Always wear eye protection. ·Hold the chisel between the thumb and forefingers – don’t make a fist around the chisel. ·Do not grip a chisel if your hands are numb. ·If another worker is nearby, place yourself between the other worker and the chipping area. ·Always use sharp chisels.

Hammer Use: ·Use the right type of hammer for the job. ·Only use hammers in good condition. ·Use only hammers to drive objects. ·Always grip the hammer close to the end and grip it tightly. ·Whenever possible, wear eye protection. ·Always concentrate on the striking point. ·Strike blows as square as possible. ·Be sure there is an unobstructed back swing. ·Don’t strike blows with the side of the hammer. ·Never strike a hammer or tempered tool with another hammer. ·Always keep your hammer free of grease and oil. ·Never allow someone else to hold a nail or chisel while striking it.

Remember: In addition to using common sense & following the techniques discussed earlier, wear safety glasses or goggles when chiseling around metal, concrete, or shooting nails. Both will decrease the chances of receiving eye or hand injuries.

Personal Tools & Equipment

True Story: An employee brought his own portable table saw from home to perform the task of cutting two-by-four lumber pieces, because a company table saw was not available for his use. The employee’s saw was not equipped with required safety features, such as the saw blade guard & splitter. During the cutting operation, the employee reached over the saw blade to retrieve a piece of lumber from behind the blade. Unfortunately, his arm came in contact with the saw blade rotating at full speed. The resulting laceration injury was severe. Consequently, the injured employee had to receive emergency medical treatment & disability compensation from an injury received while using his own equipment that wasn’t properly safeguarded. Also, the injury incident resulted in an Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) inspection, & the employer received an OSHA citation for having an unguarded saw available for use in the workplace.

Here are a few key points to remember regarding the use of your personal tools at work:

- If you bring your personal tools or equipment to the job, & they are used to perform various tasks associated with your employment, your employer is ultimately responsible for the safe condition of those tools & equipment.
- The company has the right to inspect all personal tools & equipment to ensure they are in a safe condition with all of the necessary required safety features to meet recognized safety standards.
- If your personal tools & equipment are not in compliance with recognized standards, the company can require you to upgrade them to be in compliance, or have them removed from the job immediately.
- The company can also require you to perform necessary maintenance on tools & equipment according to the manufacturer’s specifications.

Your personal tools & equipment may be owned by you, but from OSHA’s perspective, they become the responsibility of the company when they are used in the workplace.

Screwdrivers

The screwdriver is one of the most commonly misused hand tools. While it is designed to tighten or loosen screws, you can also find it being used as a pry bar, punch or chisel. When that happens, the screwdriver can slip, causing an injury or ruining the tool.

Proper Care: ·The handle should be tight, smooth, & not slippery. ·The shank should be true & straight. ·The bit should be flat, with the end at a right angle with the shank. ·Keep the bit square edged. ·Keep the bit & handle clear & free of grease & oil.

Proper Use: ·Always use the proper size bit to fit the screw head. ·Keep the bit square to the screw head. ·Never use pliers on a screwdriver; if possible, use a vise. ·Use only a standard screwdriver on a standard screw; Phillips head on a Phillips head screw. ·Select the right length for the job; don’t try to improvise. ·Always use a screwdriver with an insulated handle for electrical work.