



Tool Safety

## eSafetyLine

### **Hand Tool Safety**

In this day and age, power tools exist for nearly every task on a job site, but sometimes there is still a need for a hand tool. Although they don't carry the obvious risk associated with power tools, they should still be used carefully and respected for the damage they can do to the human body. There are three steps that can be used to pick the right hand tool. Following these steps can help reduce the chance of getting injured on the job:

1. Know the job to be done
2. "Scope out" the work space
3. Check your work posture

Tools are designed for specific purposes. If you use a tool for a task it wasn't designed for the tool could be damaged or worse, you could be injured. A screwdriver does a great job driving a screw into a wood, metal and wallboard. But when a screwdriver is used as a chisel there is a good chance the screwdriver could snap and be driven into someone's body.

The next thing to consider is the layout of the workspace, is it cramped, low to the floor or overhead. Tool selection should be based on where the tool will be used. For example, if the workspace is cramped and a lot of force is needed to get a job done, the better choice would be a tool with a longer handle that would allow for a more powerful grip. The use of the wrong tool in the wrong space will increase the chance of injury. The injury may be caused by a body part coming in contact with the tool or a musculoskeletal injury.

The position of the body while using a tool can also increase the likelihood of an injury. Working at an awkward angle may cause a tool to slip and puncture or hit

a body part. Improper position of the body can affect your shoulders, elbows, wrists, hands and back causing a strain and possible muscular tear or pull. Any of these injuries will cause a decrease in how effective a worker is and can result in time away from work. Many injuries with manual screwdrivers, for example, are associated with "slipping" while turning the screwdriver, resulting in many punctures and lacerations to the hand and leg, depending upon body position.

Injuries also occur when the correct tool is used but the tool is poorly maintained. Each hand tool should be inspected before the start of work. Tools that require sharp edges, knives, shears, hand saws, must be kept sharp. A dull edge is more of a hazard because more force is required and the tool won't "work correctly". The handles of tools must be free of splinters and cracks and must fit tightly at the head of the tool. The head of a hammer that doesn't properly fit on its handle can fly off and become a very dangerous missile. Chisels and pry bars shouldn't be used if the head is mushroomed, this could allow the hammer to slip off the head at impact and hit the employee. Any time a hand tool shows signs of excess wear it should be tagged and removed from service immediately. Taking time to choose the correct tool and inspecting tools each day will take a bit longer but the increased level of safety on the job site will certainly be worth it in the long run.

### **Discussion Questions**

How will inspecting tools before each use add to the user's safety?

What are the steps to choosing the correct hand tool?

# MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICS ADDRESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Safety Coordinator's Signature

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Date