

Hand Tools

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A hand tool has hurt almost everyone in the trades. We expect it to happen. We figure it will be minor. But sometimes it isn't. Hand tools can cause serious accidents. You could even lose a finger or eye. A hand tool, from a screwdriver to an axe, is most dangerous when you misuse it or don't keep it in good repair. Always choose the right tool for the job. You're inviting trouble if you use a tool for a job it isn't designed to do. You can damage the tool, ruin your work, and injure yourself. You or a crewmember may want to add a personal story about hand tools.

Next, point out a few hand tool hazards you have noticed at this particular job site:

Ask the Crew these Questions

After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.

1. What safety rules should you keep in mind when you use hand tools?
 - Use the right tool for the job. Never use a tool for a job it wasn't designed to do. Make sure you're familiar with your tools and know how to use them properly.
 - Keep secure footing and balance when you use tools. The area where you're standing shouldn't be slippery or cluttered.
 - Use tools on a stable work surface. Hold the work with a vise or clamps if necessary.
 - Use tools in a well-lighted area.
 - Don't work with your body in an awkward position. Some tools are poorly designed and force you to work with unnecessary strain on your wrist, arm, shoulder, or back. Use tools with a better design. Also make sure you have enough space to work, and can keep your body at a comfortable angle to the work.

- Keep tools where they belong. Never leave them on a ladder, scaffold, or overhead workspace. Keep them where they won't fall on someone or trip someone up.
- Carry tools properly. Use a tool belt, especially when you're on a ladder.

2. How do you make sure your tools stay in safe condition?

- Keep tools clean. Keep them away from oil, chemicals, and hot surfaces that may damage them.
- Inspect your tools every day before you use them. Check them for sharpness, chips, mushrooming, wear, and metal fatigue. Also make sure that bolts, nuts, and screws are tight.
- Remove damaged or defective tools from service. Tag them: DO NOT USE. If possible, show the crew a defective tool that you have tagged. If the company owns the defective tool, turn it in after you tag it. It will be repaired or disposed of. On this job site, turn in defective tools to: Give name and location: _____
- If you own the defective tool yourself, take it to your car or truck immediately after you tag it. Remove it from the site as soon as possible.
- Never use damaged or defective tools until they have been properly repaired.

3. What precautions should you take when using saw blades, knives, or other sharp tools?

- Keep blades, knives, scissors, and other sharp tools sharp. Dull tools are more hazardous than sharp ones.
- Let the cutting surface do the work, don't force it.
- Keep your knife in a sheath.
- With any sharp tool, always cut away from yourself. (Except with drawknives.)
- Stay alert.

4. Do you need to use special tools when you work near a flammable substance?

- Yes. It's safer to use special spark resistant tools near any highly flammable substance (whether it's a gas, vapor, or liquid).
- Ordinary iron or steel hand tools can produce sparks when you use them. Spark resistant tools are usually made of brass, plastic, aluminum, or wood.

We ___will or ___will not require spark resistant tools on this site. (If applicable:)

We need them in these jobs and locations:

5. What protective equipment might you need when you work with hand tools?
You may need:

- Safety glasses, goggles, or other eye protection always.
- Wire mesh gloves and an apron if there's a risk of cuts.
- Steel-toed safety shoes if there's a chance of injuring your feet.
- Boots if you're working in a wet area.
- Hearing protection (ear plugs or ear muffs) if your work will create a lot of noise.

On this job, we require you to use the following protective equipment when working with hand tools:

List types required on the site, and where to obtain:

If you have to use any of the personal protective equipment (PPE) that we've discussed, the company is required to supply it and train you in its use. (PPE is covered in more detail in a separate Training Guide.)

OSHA Regulations

OSHA requires most of the safety measures we've talked about. We have to take these precautions, it's the law. I have a Checklist of the OSHA regulations on hand tools. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting.

Company Rules

(Only if applicable.) Besides the OSHA regulations, we have some additional company rules about hand tools.

Discuss company rules

GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

ENDING THE MEETING

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

Comments

SAFETY TALKS REVIEW

Hazard Identification

The company has a written Safety and Health Program that meets all OSHA requirements. It includes identification of hazards on the site involving hand tools, as well as regular inspections, accident investigation, and correction of hazardous conditions.

Selection

1. The right tool is used for the job; tools are used within their design limitations.
2. Tools are used only for their intended purpose.
3. Tools don't force the hand or wrist into awkward positions.
4. Tools are well balanced.
5. Tools fit the hand comfortably.
6. Tools are not so heavy that they strain the arm and shoulder.
7. Handles have soft grips that don't cut into your hand.
8. Tools do not require excessive force to use.
9. Come-alongs and extensions on wrenches, jacks, and hoists are designed for the equipment they are used with.
10. Tool handles are designed to minimize the grip force needed. (For example, they are not slippery.)
11. Only cutting tools are used to cut metal strapping or banding that secures cargo.

Inspections

1. Tools are inspected daily before use and are kept clean and in good repair. They are checked for sharpness, chips, mushrooming, wear, and metal fatigue before use. Periodic checks are made for tightness of bolts, nuts, and screws.
2. Damaged, defective, or worn tools are tagged and removed from service until repaired.

Work Practices

1. Workers use only tools with which they have experience, or on which they have been trained.
2. Tools are used only on secure and stable work surfaces. Work is secured with a vise or clamps if necessary.
3. Work surfaces are adjusted to minimize reaching, bending, and other awkward postures.
4. Workers using tools stand on a clean, dry surface to prevent slipping.
5. Tasks are varied so the same tool isn't used all day, straining the hand.
6. Work areas are well lit and all equipment is in their proper location.
7. Knives are directed away from the body during cutting.
8. Hard hammers are not used to strike hardened tools.
9. Spark resistant tools are used where sources of ignition are prohibited due to the presence of flammable materials.

Personal Protective Equipment

1. If necessary, personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided by the company and worn by workers. The types used are appropriate for the work and give adequate protection.
2. Workers using tools always wear safety glasses with side shields or other eye/face protection. Eye and face protection meets the requirements of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z 87.1 1989, American National Standard Practice for Occupational and Educational Eye and Face Protection.
3. When work with tools involves potential risk of cuts, burns, harmful physical or chemical agents, or radioactive material, workers use appropriate hand protection. (Exception: Not required if gloves might become caught in moving parts or machinery).
4. If gloves are used, tools can still be gripped easily. (Tools with larger handles may be needed.)
5. When using tools, workers potentially exposed to foot injuries from crushing or penetrating actions, hot surfaces, falling objects, or hazardous substances, or who work in abnormally wet locations, use appropriate foot protection such as steel-toed safety shoes and/or boots.
6. Workers exposed to noise in excess of 90 dB use hearing protection.

Storage and Maintenance

1. Tools are stored in pouches or other appropriate containers when they are not being used. Sharp edged or pointed tools (knives, etc.) are kept in sheaths, not in workers' pockets.
2. Tools are not left on ladders, scaffolds, or overhead workspaces.

3. Tool belts are used, especially when workers are on ladders.
4. Tools are protected from contact with oil, hot surfaces, and chemicals that might damage them.
5. Tools are kept clean.
6. Sharp tools are kept sharp.