

Toolbox Talks

Hand Tool & Power Tool Safety

Our hands are on the front line of action at work and may be easily injured. A hand injury is serious and can result in a permanent disability, a life-threatening infection, or loss of ability to do certain types of work.

Pre-Inspection before use:

- Check for damaged, cracked housing, power source, accessories, and dull edges.
- Check for missing guards or protective devices.
- Check for leaking gasoline, oil, or other fluids.
- Check the overall condition of tool(s).
- Check tools for 3-wire cords except for tools that are double-insulated or battery-powered.
- Test equipment.
- Ensure housekeeping for the work area to avoid trip hazards.

Follow these guidelines for protecting your hands:

- Keep hands in a safe and clear position, away from moving parts to avoid injury.
- Use aids (i.e., push sticks and tongs) to keep distance from saw blades and hot objects.
- Be aware and alert of what you and others are doing to keep your hands safe.
- Ensure equipment is in a zero-energy state before attempting adjustments or repairs.
- Follow all lock-out procedures to prevent accidental start-up of equipment.
- Use machine guards and safety interlocks for their intended use, never bypass/remove.
- Use tools for their intended purpose.
- Store tools in a safe place to avoid damage and injury.
- Electrical work tools should be insulated.
- Take breaks in order to stay alert.
- Tools used in flammable or explosive environments should be non-sparking type.
- Wear the proper personal protective equipment before operating specific repetitive motion/vibratory/reciprocating tools (*check manufacturers' specifications for specific PPE*).
- Ensure your tool is properly grounded or is double-insulated.
- Keep power cords away from objects and chemicals that could damage insulation.
- Keep the work area and your hands dry when operating electrical equipment.
- Keep power cords clear of wet surfaces and use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Use tools in well-lit areas.
- Report poor terminal connections, broken switches, plugs, sparking or overheating equipment, and outlets without Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) in damp areas.
- Do not carry power tools by their cord or hose.
- Secure work material with clamps or a vise if possible.
- Avoid wearing clothing or jewelry that may become caught in a tool.
- Report equipment if sparking or shock comes with use.
- No horseplay around power tools.
- When turning off a tool, let it come to a complete stop before putting it down.

- Never modify three prongs. Use an adapter instead.
- Pay attention to the tool's rotation direction to avoid being struck by a flying object strike.
- Use the switch lock only when the tool is in a stand or jig.
- Make sure you have a solid footing when using heavy tools or working at an awkward angle, such as overhead.

Grounding portable electric tools is the most efficient way of safeguarding operators. If defects or shorts are inside the tool, the current drains through the metal frame and ground wire and does not pass through the operator's body.

Ground fault protection in temporary power systems is the modern method of protecting operators from potential shock. Periodic inspections of portable electrical equipment using specialized measuring devices are suggested.

Generally, all tools are to be inspected by operators frequently for the following malfunctions:

- Defective or broken insulation or cord.
- Improper or poorly made connections to terminals.
- Broken or otherwise defective plugs.
- Loose or broken switches.
- Brushes sparking

Adhere to OSHA regulations for equipment grounding when working with cord-and-plug connected equipment that requires grounding, including the use of GFCI, including equipment grounding conductor program for all cord sets, receptacles (temporary), and equipment connected by cord and plugs.

Storage:

- Drain equipment (of gasoline) if stored for extended periods of time.
- De-energize tool prior to storage (includes air, hydraulic pressure, and removing loads).
- Store electric-powered tools in dry areas.
- Store flammables in accordance with applicable regulations (527CMR6).

Stretch and flex before operating tools for extended periods of time to avoid repetitive motion injuries.

Ensure crew/individual is trained in the Code of Safe Work Practices of the tool before operating.