

Get the Job Done Safely

Taking these general safety precautions can help you avoid injury while using tools.

- Avoid wearing loose clothing, ties or jewelry when using tools with moving parts.
- Tie back long hair and keep your hands away from pinch points and sharp or moving parts.
- Keep your mind on your work, and take a break if you feel drowsy or unfocused.
- Don't operate power tools if you are ill, taking a medication that causes drowsiness, are fatigued or have consumed alcohol.
- Save the cigarettes for later. Smoking while using power tools poses a fire hazard.
- Work with tools in a brightly lit, clean, dry area.
- Know your tool. Follow manufacturer instructions, and attend any training or safety seminars your workplace provides.

When You're at Risk for RSIs ...

RSIs occur when the same motion, such as gripping, twisting or vibrating, is performed over and over again. This repetitive motion stresses muscles, nerves and tendons in your neck, back, shoulders, hands and wrists. Prevent RSIs by taking these precautions:

- Use ergonomic tool grips that are comfortable to hold.
- Use power tools rather than hand tools when you can, and make sure they are as low vibration as possible.

(UN)FRIENDLY JACK: Jackhammers can cause repetitive stress injuries and fatigue from vibration, and injuries if they slip. Wear the right PPE, including a face shield, hearing protection and safety shoes. Installing heavy rubber grips on the jackhammer can help reduce vibration and improve grip.

More Tool Tips

- ✓ Carry sharp tools in a sheath, holster or toolbox, not in your pocket.
- ✓ Do not strike nails or other objects with the side or cheek of the hammer.
- ✓ Match the size and type of screwdriver blade to fit the head of the screw. Tips that are too small or too large can wear down the screw head or make the screwdriver slip off.
- ✓ When you are performing electrical work, use an insulated screwdriver — one that has the blue handle.
- ✓ Operate spark-inducing tools such as grinders, drills or saws away from flammable materials.
- ✓ Don't use a power hand tool to cut wet or water soaked building materials or to repair pipe leaks.
- ✓ Wear hearing protectors — special earmuffs or earplugs — as protection from noise on the job. Use earplugs (available at drugstores or hardware stores) at home when you use power tools.
- ✓ Make sure the power switch is turned off before plugging in your saw.
- ✓ Don't alter the anti-kickback device. Kickback can occur when the blade jams in the wood and throws the saw or wood toward the person using it. Wait for the saw blade to stop before pulling away from a cut to avoid kickback.
- ✓ Discard saw blades that are chipped, bent or damaged.



Hand & Power Tool Safety



Safety in Hand

In a world of labor saving devices, people have become accustomed to the ease of using hand and power tools to get a job done quickly, efficiently and precisely. Whether you use tools on the job or are tackling a weekend home improvement project, it's important to take safety into your own hands and follow the basic tool rules.

5 Tool Rules

1. Keep all tools clean and in good repair.
2. Use the right tool for the job.
3. Inspect every tool for damage before you use it; do not use damaged tools.
4. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using a tool correctly.
5. Wear the right personal protective equipment (PPE), such as goggles or gloves, for the tool you are using.

What are some hazards?

All tools are manufactured with safety in mind; yet, accidents happen usually through misuse and/or poor maintenance. Learn to recognize the hazards associated with different types of tools and the safety precautions necessary to prevent those hazards. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration offers some examples:

- Using a screwdriver as a chisel may cause the tip of the screwdriver to break and fly hitting the user or someone else.
- If a wooden handle on a tool such as a hammer or an axe is in disrepair, the tool may come apart causing the hammerhead or axe blade to hit the user or another person.
- Impact tools such as chisels, wedges or drift pins in poor condition are unsafe because the head of the tool can shatter on impact and send fragments flying.

Safety Checklists:

Using Hand Tools

A hand tool is any tool that is powered manually, such as a saw, wrench or screwdriver. Did you know? Hand tools that are damaged or broken present the greatest hazards. Inspect tools for wear and tear before you use them.

Hand tool tips:

- ✓ Make sure the blades of saws, knives, scissors and other cutting tools are sharp and free from notches or cracks.
- ✓ Discard or repair a wrench or other gripping tool that has loose, sprung jaws.
- ✓ Look out for mushroomed or flattened heads on impact tools, such as wedges and chisels.
- ✓ Check tools with wooden handles for splinters or cracks.
- ✓ Don't use iron tools around flammable substances — they can produce sparks.
- ✓ Wear safety goggles and gloves while using hand tools.

Stay on your feet: Keep the floor of your work area clean, dry and free of debris. A slip or trip while holding a tool can lead to serious injury.



Power Tool Smarts

Power tools are powered by an energy source, such as electricity, compressed air or liquid fuel. **Watch out:** Power tools can present a dual hazard — you could be injured by the tool itself or by an energy discharge from its power source.

Power up, stay safe:

- ✓ Never carry a tool by its cord or hose, and don't pull on the cord or hose to disconnect the power.
 - ✓ Disconnect the tool from its energy source before cleaning it or changing blades, bits or other parts.
 - ✓ Keep your fingers away from the power button when carrying the tool.
 - ✓ Remove damaged or worn power tools from the work area and label them "Do not use."
 - ✓ Keep power tool cords and hoses away from heat, oil, chemicals and sharp edges.
 - ✓ Plug electrical tools into the right type of grounded, insulated outlet, and never tamper with the plug to make it fit a different outlet.
 - ✓ Use tools only at the manufacturer's recommended operating speed, and never force a tool or apply too much pressure to it to rush the job.
 - ✓ Know how to disconnect the power source from a tool, and do not walk away and leave a tool on.
- Hands free:** When using a tool, secure whatever you are working on in a clamp or vice so your hands are free to operate the tool safely.

ON GUARD!

Safety guards are there for a reason. **Never remove guards or modify them in any way. If you must remove a guard to clean or service a power tool, disconnect the tool from its power source first, and replace the guard before restoring power. Larger power tools should be equipped with an emergency shutoff switch that stops the tool if the operator lets go of it.**

Dust in the Air

Some tools, such as belt sanders, saws and grinding wheels, can produce another hazard besides just the operation of the tool itself: Dust created from grinding, cutting and sanding can be a hazard to lungs, eyes and skin. **What to do:**

- Wear tight-fitting safety glasses at all times.
- Protect your skin with a long-sleeved shirt and gloves.
- Use a filter-type respirator if working in dusty conditions.