Forks, Spades, and Hoes – Landscaping Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The primary tools of a landscape workers are forks, spades, and hoes. When used appropriately and maintained, these tools are essential in landscaping work.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

These tools present **common hazards** both when is use and when left lying around work areas. **Common hazards** include the following:

- Tripping over tools left lying on the ground
- Blisters and subsequent infections on the hands
- Overexertion injuries to wrists, back, or shoulders from repetitive use

Incident example

- A worker stepped on the tines of a rake that had been left lying on the ground by a co-worker. The handle of the rake hit her in the eye and caused a hemorrhage inside the eye. She was temporarily blind in that eye for almost a month until the bleeding resolved.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Common sense protocol in the selection and use of these tools are as follows:

- Choose tools that fit your body, your hands, and your work style.
- Use good quality tools.
- Wear gloves appropriate for the task.
- Change tasks frequently or take mini breaks.

- Use a loose grip on the tools.
- Keep your wrists straight.
- Recognize the early signs of overuse injuries, including numbness, tingling, swelling, redness, and pain in the wrists, shoulders, or back. If you experience any of these symptoms, stop work or change the type of work you’re doing for the day.

Responsibilities of Employers

- Provide ergonomically designed tools.
- Maintain and repair tools.
- Train workers on the safe use of forks, spades, and hoes before they start work.
- Demonstrate how to hold, use, and store these tools.
- Remind workers about the PPE they are required to wear.
- Provide adequate supervision after training.

FINAL WORD

Without forks, spades (shovels) and hoes, our landscaping culture and work would not exist. It is fundamental for the general public to recognize the importance that these tools bring to the landscaping industry.