Hand and Power Tools – 10 Tips for Safe Use

Safety Talk

What's at Stake?
Hand and power tool injuries send more than 400,000 workers to the emergency room and cause hundreds of deaths every year.

What's the Danger?
Using hand and power tools exposes you to hazards like:

- Flying objects
- Harmful dusts
- Gases and fumes
- Unhealthy ergonomic practices, such as working in awkward postures.
- Slips, trips and falls

These hazards regularly cause eye and facial injuries, cuts, bruises, burns, amputations, and back injuries.

How to Protect Yourself

1. **Stay alert!** Using tools when you are tired makes an accident or injury more likely. Never use tools while under the influence of medications, drugs or alcohol. Doing so puts you and others in danger.
2. **Always wear required PPE.**
   Hardhats, safety glasses, ear plugs and safety shoes are required for most tool work.
3. **Secure your work.** Use clamps or a vise to prevent accidental slipping. Clamps and vises also leave both of your hands free to operate and control the tool.
4. **Put up signs and barriers to keep others away from your work area.**
   This measure protects both them and you.

5. **Practice good housekeeping.** To reduce the risk of slips, trips, and falls, keep floors clean and dry and equipment and cords out of walkways and aisles.
6. **Use the correct tool for the job.** Incorrect use can lead to tools slipping and breaking and cause accidents and injuries.
7. **Don’t take shortcuts.** You don’t save time by taking a shortcut if you are sidelined by injury.
8. **Watch for electrical hazards.** Metal hand tools that come in contact
   with live electrical wires can shock and kill you. Electric power tools should NEVER be used in or around water.
9. **Follow ergonomic work practices.** Stretching, taking rest breaks and alternating tasks can help prevent repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome.
10. **Inspect**. Maintain. Store. Always inspect your tools before each use. Defective tools, like hammers with mushroomed heads and power tools with missing guards are dangerous. Keep your tools clean, sharp and well maintained, and store them properly for maximum safe and effective use.

FINAL WORD

It’s possible to use hand and power tools without incident if you understand the hazards and have been properly trained in the safe use of these devices.