Hand and Power Tools Stats and Facts

DID YOU KNOW?

Hand and power tools are a common part of our everyday lives and are present in nearly every industry. These tools help us to easily perform tasks that otherwise would be difficult or impossible. However, these simple tools can be hazardous and have the potential for causing severe injuries when used or maintained improperly. Special attention toward hand and power tool safety is necessary in order to reduce or eliminate these hazards.

Use the Right Tool for the Job

Using the correct tool for the job is the first step in safe hand tool use. Tools are designed for specific needs. That’s why you’ll find screwdrivers with various lengths and tip styles and pliers with different head shapes. Using any tool inappropriately is a step in the wrong direction. To avoid personal injury and tool damage, select the proper tool to do the job safely.

Quality professional hand tools will last many years if they are taken care of and treated with respect. Manufacturers design tools for specific applications. If you use your screwdriver as a chisel or a pry bar, you can’t expect it to be in good shape when you actually need to drive a screw. Use tools only for their intended purpose.

Work tools and power tools cause hundreds of thousands of injuries each year. Many of these are used in the construction industry. However, they can also be used in other fields such as road work, production and manufacturing, and the automobile industry, to name a few.

Due to their moving parts and electrical powering, work tools can be dangerous to use. They can result in serious work-related

injuries, and in some cases, death. Below are some work tools accident statistics that were compiled from various sources such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics and OSHA.

- In 2012, the incident rate for non-fatal injuries at worked due to contact with objects or work equipment was 25.5 cases for every 10,000 workers.
- In 2012, contact with objects or equipment accounted for 712 deaths in all industries.
- Around 6% of all workplace fatal injuries are directly caused by electrocution (this is for companies employing 11+ workers).
- Surveys estimate that work tools and power tools cause an average of nearly 400,000 visits to the emergency room each year.

Here are some statistics on the number of emergency room (ER) visits per year caused by individual types of tools (source: "The Most Dangerous Power Tools," Forbes.com, December 2009):

- Power nailers or nail guns: 37,000 emergency room visits/year
- John Deere-type Riding Lawn Mowers: 37,000 hospital visits a year
- Chain Saws: 36,000 ER visits/year
- Stationary Table Saws: 29,000 ER visits/year
- Snowblowers: 5,7000 ER Visits per year; 19 deaths recorded since 1992
- Circular or Rotary Saws: 10,600 ER cases/year
- Power Drills: 5,800
- Backhoes: Average of 38 construction fatalities a year
- Air Compression Devices: 2,400
- Wood Chippers: Average of 3 deaths a year

In addition to heavy machinery used at work such as drills, industrial presses, etc., some work tools are also used in home settings for private use. These can also be dangerous, especially if the person is unfamiliar with the operation of such work tools. Thus, it's important to exercise caution when using work tools.

Lastly, manufacturers recall hundreds of thousands of power tools and work tools every year. Failing to keep current on the status of a work tool can lead to serious injury. Both workers and employers should be informed of the dangers involved with product recalls and product defects.

According to a study conducted by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, hand and power tool injuries send an average of 400,000 people to the emergency room each year. These tools can cause lacerations, puncture wounds, dismemberment, burns, electrical shock, and death. Fortunately, there are many preventative measures that employees can take to prevent tool injuries from occurring.