Use Tools Safely



How This Affects You:

You can be seriously injured by using common workplace tools incorrectly. Eye injuries, amputations, cuts, puncture wounds, electrocution, and many other kinds of injury have resulted from mishandling handheld powered and non-powered tools.

Here are some tips on the safe use of tools and equipment:

Wear proper protective gear
This may include the use of safety eyewear, hearing protection, and footwear. Ask your supervisor if you're not certain what protective equipment you need.

Have a good work attitude
Take your time and concentrate on what you are doing. A moment of inattention when using a powered tool can cause severe injuries.

Check all tools carefully before use
Inspect them for signs of wear and damage. Do not use broken, cracked, worn, or dented tools.

Use all tools only for their intended purpose
Use screwdrivers for turning screws, not for prying open cans or chiseling wood. Incorrect use may cause the tool to suddenly fail and hurt you.

Read the instruction manual for tools
Or ask your supervisor for direction in their use. Don't operate a tool if you're even a little uncertain how it works.

Check power tools

- Look for frayed wires, loose electrical connections, and broken housings. Never use an electrical tool that is missing the third prong on the plug.
- Cordless powered tools should be checked to ensure the battery pack is secure, undamaged, and of the correct type.
- Use the correct attachments. Grinding wheels, for example, must be an exact match with the tool.

Never remove or tamper with safety guards on equipment
Guards are put on a tool to keep you safe from flying debris, or "kick-back" or another machine hazard. Removing them exposes you to unnecessary injury.

Tool safety is also workspace housekeeping safety:

- Don’t leave tools where they’ll be a tripping hazard.
- Return your tools to their proper place as soon as you are finished.
- Protect blades and other parts of the tool during storage.
- Clean tools according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Keep electrical and extension cords away from traffic pathways.

Control your workspace:

- Never use electrical tools or tools that spark near flammable or combustible materials or in wet environments.
- Know where your first aid and eyewash stations are.

Following these simple tips will help you avoid being injured by the tools of your trade.