

## Hand Tool Safety

Tools are a necessary requirement on most job sites, indoors and outdoors. However, hand tools, when used improperly are not kept in good condition can also result in very serious injuries.

Workers should be sure that they take good care of their hand tools to avoid common injuries such as:

- Severe cuts or punctures that could require stitches
- Scrapes and abrasions that can end up as skin infections
- Eye injuries or blindness from chipping or chiseling
- Electrical shocks from using improperly insulated tools for electrical work
- Carpal tunnel syndrome if the wrong tool is used repeatedly or the right tool is used incorrectly
- Bruises or broken bones when tools slip, fall or are carelessly thrown



Injuries with tools often take place when workers fail to use them as intended or forget to inspect them before use. Workers should be trained and reminded to follow safe

**OSHA Standard 1910.242(a)** *Each employer shall be responsible for the safe condition of tools and equipment used by employees, including tools and equipment which may be furnished by employees.*

Hand tools should always be inspected before use. Never use hand tools that are rusted, cracked, warped, splintered, loose, damaged or broken!

- Look for any damage such as cracks in handles, sharp edges, or splintering. If a wooden handle on a tool, such as a hammer or an axe is loose, splintered or cracked, the head has the potential for fly off and cause injuries.
- Make sure that tools are not covered in paint, grease, or dirt that can create a hazard or hide serious defects.
- Wrenches that are warped, rusted, or sprung can result in breaking or slippage that can lead to serious hand injuries.
- Saws, knives, scissors, and other similar hand tools should be sharp. Dull tools can actually be more hazardous than sharp tools.
- If performing work around flammable gases, volatile liquids or other explosive materials use a hand tool made of non ferrous material, iron or steel hand tools may produce sparks that can cause an ignition around flammable substances.
- Ensure jacks are placed on a firm foundation. If a firm foundation is absent, the base should be blocked to prevent slippage.
- Ensure hand tools are insulated if working near energized electrical parts.



**OSHA Standard 1910.335(a)(2)(i)** *When working near exposed energized conductors or circuit parts, each employee shall use insulated tools or handling equipment if the tools or handling equipment might make contact with such conductors or parts. If the insulating capability of insulated tools or handling equipment is subject to damage, the insulating material shall be protected.*