

Tool Box Talk

The Safe Use of POWER TOOLS

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The common tools that we use each day are often overlooked for the hazards they pose if not properly used or maintained. Addressing these hazards will provide awareness for the person conducting the task with the selected tool and how to minimize the risk of the hazard by using the tool properly.

There are a variety of power tools throughout workplaces, such as table saws, drills, impacts, circular saws, jigsaws and explosive actuated fasteners, that pose significant hazards to the user. Training each employee on the proper use of hand and portable power tools should include proper use of the tool, manufacturer's recommendations, potential hazards and include a practical demonstration of the use of the tool.

Pre-use Inspection (done prior to every use) and maintenance should follow manufacturer's recommendations. It should include checking items such as electrical components and ensure the tool is in good repair, guards are in place, and blades are in good condition. The inspection should include checking for damaged or crushed housings, condition of cords and that power cords have a three-pronged plug end or that the tool is double insulated, and that extension cords are plugged into a GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter).

Bits and accessories should be in good repair and not missing teeth in the blade or a broken bit tip.

Dull blades and missing guards are a

warning to remove the tool from service to get repaired.

Remember to keep power cords away from heat, water, and oil. Light-duty power cords should not be used for heavy load applications. Do not disconnect the power supply by pulling or jerking the cord from the outlet; pulling the cord rather than the plug may result in electric shock and cause damage to the cord and plug. Tying knots in power cords is not a good practice; knots can cause short circuits and electric shocks. Do not operate electrical tools in an area containing high levels of explosive vapours or gases as this could act as the ignition source for a fire. Do not overload the circuit by plugging several power cords into one outlet as this is a fire hazard and could be a tripping hazard.

Material being cut should also be inspected to insure that there are no nails or other foreign objects in the material.

Ensure that the tool is the right tool for the job and follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Ensure you are wearing the correct PPE for the task. Eye and ear protection should always be worn.

If you are unsure of the tool or its use, ask a supervisor or co-worker for clarification.

All workers using power tools should be trained in the care, use and maintenance according to manufacturer's recommendations.



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