



Safety Fact Sheet 0408 – Hand Tools

Environmental Health and Safety – (213) 740-6448

Tools are indispensable helpmates, and a good set of hand tools is essential to many of the tasks we perform each day. Unfortunately, tools also contribute to countless injuries when used incorrectly. However, proper work practices will prevent most injuries associated with use of hand tools.

Safe Use of Hand Tools

Avoid injuries associated with hand tools by observing the following precautions:

- Use the correct tool for the job;
- Keep tools in good condition. Maintain handles that are tight and free from defect. Keep cutting tools sharp. Assure that wedge and punch heads are not "mushroomed";
- Use and maintain power tools according to manufacturer's instructions;
- Assure that power tools are grounded or double-insulated. Never remove the ground prong or use a two prong adapter;
- Switch off and unplug power tools before changing blades, servicing, or repairing;
- Avoid clothing with strings or loose ends that may catch on rotating parts;
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as glasses, goggles, dust masks, face shields, hearing protection;
- Keep bystanders at a safe distance;
- Keep all guards and shields in place;
- Unplug and safely store tools after use. When practical, lock out power tools to prevent others from using them without permission.

Inspection

Inspect tools before and after use; ask yourself the following questions:

- Are tools in safe condition?
- Am I qualified to use these tools?
- Are power tools properly grounded?
- Are guards and shields in place?
- Is the appropriate personal protective equipment available?
- Are tools put away and properly stored?

Wrap-Up

The old saying "use the right tool for the job" applies both at work and at home. Decisions that you and your workmates make today can affect your entire life--be careful!