

HAND TOOL SAFETY CHECKLIST #1

Knowing your hammers, screwdrivers, pliers, and jacks.

Many accidents and injuries can be avoided by keeping your tools in good condition and using them correctly. It is a good rule to inspect your tools before and after use, looking for defects that could cause an injury. Defective tools should be repaired or replaced promptly.

Preventing accidents can be easy

These tools seem common and easy to use. Unfortunately, people rarely review how to use them safely. Knowing how to operate your tools prevents accidents. How would your team answer the questions about these common hand tools?

Hammers

- Is your hammer head appropriate for the surface you are pounding? For a hardened steel surface, use a metal hammer or one with a plastic, wood or rawhide head.
- Do you wear safety glasses to protect your eyes from flying chips, nail heads, or scale?

Screwdrivers

- Do you use a vise to drive screws into small objects?
- Have you discarded twisted screwdriver tips? Twisted tips could slip and cause an injury.

Pliers

- Do you substitute pliers for a wrench or a hammer? Pliers chew up nuts and bolt heads and cannot grip them securely.
- When cutting wires, do you secure the length of the wire in a vise? Remember to hold the open end of the wire with your free hand to prevent the cut-off end from flying.
- If a vise is unavailable, do you kneel on the floor and hold the wire with one foot? This is correct procedure to cut wire.

Jacks

- Have you checked the capacity plate to determine the lifting power of the jack?
- Do you remove the jack handle after reaching the desired elevation? If not, the handle could be struck, causing the jack to topple from under the load.
- Do you watch for leaks in hydraulic jacks? Oil and grease on the bottom of the jack is particularly hazardous.

Thought Provokers

1. What conditions at our work site could cause an accident?
2. What other injuries do you know of that were caused by the misuse of hand tools?
3. Are there any specific points or problems you wish to discuss?