



Toolbox Talk: The Proper Use and Care of Hand Tools

Introduction/Overview:

There's an old saying that has been attributed to many people from [Mark Twain to Abraham Maslow](#) that goes, "When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." There is some truth to that, but the misuse of hand tools can cause severe injuries and damage to valuable tools. Using the correct tool for the job is the first step in using hand tools correctly. The second step is proper care of them. When tools are misused and abused, they can become dangerous and ineffective. Using a screwdriver for a chisel or pry bar may result in the screwdriver's blade being bent, chipped, broken, or possibly resulting in a hand or eye injury.

Statistics:

The [University of Wisconsin](#) states hand tools are involved in **6%** of all compensated work injuries with an average cost of \$1,250. Hand tools are involved in 14% of non-compensated work injuries.

According to [The Slice Blog](#), 55.86% of injuries from hand tools are lacerations. Of course, hand tools cause other injuries, including broken bones, bruises, amputation, and ergonomic issues.

In an article titled [Most Common Injuries from Hand Tools](#), the author estimates that 100,000 people end up in the emergency room annually due to injuries suffered while using hand tools.

Talking Points:

Use the correct tool for the job. Do not use a screwdriver as a chisel or a wrench as a hammer.

Inspect tools for damage or defects before and after use. Do not use damaged tools.

When using cutting tools, cut away from your body and make sure they are sharp. Dull tools require more effort and are more likely to slip, resulting in injuries.

Never carry pointed or sharp tools in your pocket. Consider using a tool belt.

Replace or correctly repair tools with cracked, worn out, or loose handles. Do not tape or wire them.

Properly store tools. Ensure blades or pointed ends are covered to prevent injuries.

Never hold your work in one hand while trying to unscrew a screw.

Do not use chisels with mushroomed heads.

Use spark-resistant tools in explosive or flammable atmospheres.

Developed by:



Additional Discussion Notes:

Final Thoughts:

When purchasing replacement or new hand tools, consider buying ergonomically designed tools. Always wear the proper PPE as well.

NOTE: Always promote discussion with the attendees. If a question comes up that no one in attendance can answer, please contact OWC or the Loss Control Innovations consultants for assistance.

Johnny Nugent

Risk Management Specialist

johnny.nugent@dhrm.virginia.gov

804-225-2168

Lee Affholter, COSS, ASC

Loss Control Consultant

laffholter@lcinnovations.com

757-256-3364

Curtis H. Stacy, MESH, ASC, COHC

Loss Control Consultant

curtis.stacy@dhrm.virginia.gov

434-594-8978

References:

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