



SAFETY SHARE

February 11, 2016

HAND TOOLS

Every day we use hand tools both at home and at work. They are the basis of our work...gotta have them! Like any other tool, hand tools no matter if they are shovels or circular saws each have their own hazards and can be the source of serious, painful and expensive injuries if you are not careful.

Hand tool injuries are often a result of using the wrong tool or using tools improperly. The following tips can help reduce or eliminate the risk of injury when hand tools are used:

- Use the right tool for the job.
- Keep tools clean and in good working condition.
- Use tools only in the ways they were designed to be used.
- Do not use excessive pressure or force on any hand tool.
- Never use a “cheater” to increase the leverage of any tool.
- Store tools in such a way as to minimize or eliminate damage to the tool while in storage or transit.
- When putting shovels, rakes, picks, and sledges in trailer or truck beds make sure that they are neatly stacked and out of the way so that they do not present trip hazards when people need to enter the truck or trailer bed.
- When using knives and cutters, cut away from your body and keep the blades sharp.
- When finished using a shovel or rake stand them against a tree or vehicle rather than lay them on the ground. If on the ground they pose a trip hazard which could lead to a potentially severe injury to you or a co-worker.

Remember to always check your hand tools **before** using them. Here are some examples of defects to watch for:

- Loose, split or cracked handles (e.g. shovels and picks).
- Worn out jaws on wrenches
- Loose heads on rakes and picks
- Mushroomed heads on hammers and chisels

Never use defective tools. Always point them out to your supervisor and have them replaced. Hand tools are designed to make your job easier and to help you be more effective. Use them with safety in mind.