

Information Bulletin

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Hand Tools – Plastic and Rubber Products Manufacturing

Hand tools are used on a daily basis for various and assorted tasks. In fact, it is often easy to overlook or forget about basic safety procedures. Tools are designed with safety in mind, but if they are misused or abused, the risk of an accident increases.

Give employees the benefit of a review of basic safety procedures – and prevent an incident or accident at your company.

Care and Control of Hand Tools

Hand tools should be handled with care, maintained and properly stored. Storage in sheds requires special attention. Humidity will warp and rust metal. Do not store tools in a metal storage facility during hot weather, if humidity is too low, wooden handles become brittle and shrink.

If possible, use a centralized inventory control system to assure uniform inventory, inspection procedures and maintenance by a trained employee.

When there is a high frequency of use, ergonomics tools should be used. These tools allow the hand, wrist and arm to work in a neutral position; this reduces injury to the upper extremities due to repetitive motion injuries.

Employees should be trained on all new tool designs to ensure their proper use.

When employees use their own tools, supervisors should examine them to ensure that they are safe and in useable condition. Remember that the employer is ultimately responsible for seeing that defective tools are not used.

Use of hand tools

The most significant precaution to be taken when working with hand tools is to select the right tool for the job. As an example, never use a wrench as a hammer or a screwdriver as a pry bar.

Carry your tools in a tool belt and pouch that has been specifically designed for protection.

Use insulated tools when working in or around electrical components – look for a dielectric label. Be aware that some handles on tools are only plastic dipped and are not insulated against an electrical charge.

Tools such as; knives, picks and awls require special guarding to prevent slippage:

- Metal guards surrounding the hilt of the handles
- Specifically designed and shaped handles
- Recessed sheet metal guards positioned on the side, top and/or bottom of the handles
- Keep knives and cutting tools sharp and wear gloves wherever the potential for injury exists

Secure your work with a clamp whenever viable and direct strokes away from your body.

Whenever a tool has a mushroomed head, redress it on a grinding wheel.

Don't take a hammer for granted. There are many types and styles specifically designed for a particular type of job.