



## Sharp and Cutting Tool Safety

Hand-held sharp and cutting tools are frequently used in the workplace. The tools range from scissors, razors, saws, and knives to pruners, chisels, and snips. While these tools are very different and can be used for a wide variety of jobs, they have some common hazards and safety precautions. Horseplay should be forbidden around sharp and cutting tools.

Sharp and cutting tools can cause cuts and puncture wounds, if they're not handled properly. Workers should be trained in the tool manufacturer's directions for proper use, including how to inspect, maintain, and sharpen the tool. For some tools, workers must wear personal protective equipment such as safety glasses and well-fitting gloves.

In order to choose the right tool for the job, workers should consider not only the job task but the type, hardness, and size of the material on which they'll be working. Substituting the wrong tool for the job can lead to an accident or injury. Workers should use only quality tools that are sharp and in good condition. If a tool is broken, dull or damaged, it should be tagged as such and taken out of service.

The most important rule to remember about using sharp and cutting tools is to ALWAYS cut away from the body and face. When cutting with one hand, workers should know where their other hand is. If a sharp tool is dropped, workers should be taught not to try to catch it but allow it to fall, making sure that their legs and feet are out of the way.

The safe way to work with a sharp or cutting tool is to concentrate on the task at hand, making straight, even cuts without rocking, prying or twisting the tool. Hammering or applying excessive force or pressure to sharp and cutting tools can cause them to slip. Keep in mind, that some materials or outdoor conditions can also make tools slippery.

Workers need to be careful when transporting and storing sharp tools. Workers should be instructed not to carry a sharp tool in their pocket; to use a sheath, belt or apron; and when there is a pause in work, to hold the tool at their sides but a safe distance from their body. When walking with a sharp tool, the tool should be carried with the blade down and away from the body. When climbing with a sharp tool, tool belts or buckets with hand lines should be used so workers can have both

hands to grip the ladder. When passing a sharp or cutting tool to another worker, tools should be passed with the hand first and the blade down; they should never be tossed from one worker to another.

When not in use, sharp or cutting tools should be stored in a sturdy tool box or on a tool rack with the sharp edges suitably covered. Otherwise, they should be placed near the back of work benches to keep handles or blades from extending over the edge.