CrewSigned

Hand Tool Safety Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

Hammers, wrenches, screwdrivers, chisels, knives and pry bars do not have motors, so it is easy to think of them as safe. But hand tools cause a lot of injuries: cuts, smashed fingers, eye injuries from flying chips, and strains from using the wrong tool. Most of those injuries come from two things, using a damaged tool or using a tool the wrong way.

Use the right tool for the job. A screwdriver is not a chisel or a pry bar. A wrench is not a hammer. Pliers are not a wrench. When a tool is used for something it was not made for, it slips, breaks or sends a piece flying. If you do not have the right tool, get it.

Check your tools before you use them. Look for cracked or loose handles, mushroomed heads on chisels and punches, worn jaws on wrenches and pliers, dull blades, and splinters on wooden handles. A mushroomed head can send chips of metal into your eye or hand. A loose hammer head can fly off. If a tool is damaged, take it out of use and get it repaired or replaced.

Use tools with good technique. Pull on a wrench rather than push when you can, so your knuckles do not hit something if it slips. Keep your body out of the path of the tool. Cut away from yourself and away from others. Keep blades sharp, because a dull blade takes more force and is more likely to slip. Hold small pieces in a clamp or vise, not in your hand.

Wear safety glasses whenever you are striking, chipping, cutting or prying. Gloves help with grip and protect from scrapes, but make sure they fit.

Carry and store tools safely. Use a tool belt, pouch or box. Do not carry sharp or pointed tools in your pockets. Carry blades pointed down and away from you. Do not leave tools on ladders, scaffolds or overhead where they can fall. When working at height, use tool lanyards so a dropped tool does not hit someone below.

Keep your tools clean and in good shape, and they will take care of you.

Discussion questions

1. Which hand tool in your bag or on this site is worn out or damaged and should be replaced?
2. What is a hand tool you have seen used for the wrong job, and what happened?
3. How do we keep tools from falling when we work at height on this job?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1926.301, Hand tools
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.301

SOURCES

Hand and Power Tools (OSHA 3080): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3080.pdf
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Hand and Power Tools: https://www.osha.gov/hand-power-tools

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Hand Tool Safety Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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