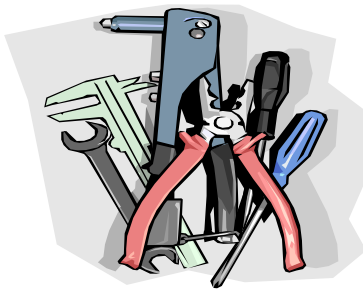


SMALL TOOLS..BIG HAZARDS



The "small" tools we all use in construction sometimes pose the "biggest" hazards. Since these tools are small, we think of them as gadgets used to tighten screws, dig shallow holes, saw a 2 x 4 in half, or maybe sand a piece of tile. But, if we are careless in the way we handle and use these small tools, we will accumulate quite a few injuries to our fingers, our hands, our eyes, and maybe even our life.

What does OSHA have to say about small tools? Quite a bit. Here are some small (but important) tips:

- **All hand and power tools** and similar equipment, whether furnished by the employer or the employee, shall be maintained in a safe condition.
- **One or more methods of machine guarding** shall be provided to protect the operator and other employees in the machine area.
- **Machines designed for a fixed location** shall be securely anchored to prevent "walking or moving."
- **Employees exposed to the hazards of flying**, abrasive and splashing objects shall be provided with safety goggles.
- **The wooden handles** of tools shall be kept free of splinters or cracks.
- **Electrical power tools** shall be of the approved double insulated type, or grounded.
- **Compressed air shall not be used** for cleaning purposes.
- **The use of hoses, or power tools cords**, shall not be used for hoisting or lowering tools.
- **All fuel-powered tools** shall be "stopped" while being refueled.

POWDERED-ACTUATED TOOLS

These tools take *special precautions*, such as training, certain operational disciplines, and restrictions, such as:

- **Only employees who have been trained** in the operation of the particular tool in use shall be allowed to operate a powder-actuated tool
- The tool shall be tested each day before loading
- Tools found not in proper working order shall be *immediately removed from service*.
- **Tools shall not be loaded** until just prior to the intended firing time.
- **Loaded tools** shall not be left unattended.
- Tools shall *not be used in an explosive* or flammable atmosphere.
- **Don't play "cops" and robbers"** with your powder-actuated tools.

GOOD CONDITION

- **No sharp/jagged edges** on any tools.
- **Keep tools in Tool Shed** when not in use.
- Use "**pulley system**" when raising and lowering tools to another worker...or workstation.
- **Never climb a ladder** when you are carrying any type of tool or supplies. Use "both hands" on the rungs as you ascend and descend ladder.
- **Defective tools** should be tagged OUT-OF-SERVICE and placed in tool shed, C-chest, etc.

GENERAL SAFETY RULES

Here are some “general safety rules” that apply to workers using any type of tools:

- **Keep your work area well lighted** (so you can see what you are doing).
- **Keep your work area clean** (inside and outside).
- **Make tool repairs** only if you are “qualified.”
- Always use safety features such as **three-prong electrical plugs**, double-insulated tools, and safety switches.
- **Check all tools daily** for defects, malfunctioning parts, loose fittings, etc.
- **Keep machine guards** in operational order
- **Use appropriate personal protective equipment**, such as safety glasses, respirators, and hearing protection.
- **Use the “right tool”** for the “right job.”

STORAGE OF TOOLS

You should regularly inspect your jobsite trailers, storage sheds, vehicles and equipment, for tools that may be stored in them.

Get rid of defective tools, and mark them **OUT-OF-SERVICE**. Check the beds of pick-up trucks, and cabs as well, for stray tools that have been “thrown in or under seats, cabinets, dashboard compartments, under tarps.

SMALL TOOLS are sometimes the cause of numerous cuts, abrasions, broken fingers, and miscellaneous injuries, many of which can be long-term disabling. Pay special attention to all of the company's so-called “small tools, and keep them in A-1 condition.”