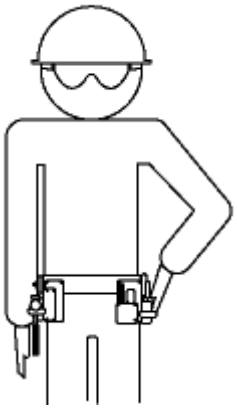
Hand Tools – General Hand Tool Operation – Fact Sheet

WHAT ARE SOME BASIC TIPS WHEN USING HAND TOOLS?

- Ensure that employees are properly trained in the safe use of hand tools.
- Always provide training on how to choose the right tool for the job, how to correctly use each tool, and how to identify when tools need repair.
- Select the right tool for the job. Substitutes increase the chance of having an accident.
- Use tools designed to allow wrist to stay straight. Avoid using hand tools with your wrist bent.
- Use good quality tools.
- Keep tools in good condition at all times.
- Inspect tools for defects before use. Replace or repair defective tools.
- Keep cutting tools sharp and cover sharp edges with a suitable covering to protect the tool and to prevent injuries from unintended contact.
- Replace cracked, splintered, or broken handles on files, hammers, screwdrivers, or sledges.
- Ensure that the handles of tools like hammers and axes fit tightly into the head of the tool.
- Replace worn jaws on wrenches, pipe tools and pliers.
- Redress burred or mushroomed heads of striking tools.
- Pull on a wrench or pliers. Never push unless you hold the tool with your palm open.
- Point sharp tools (e.g., saws, chisels, knives) laying on benches away from aisles and handles should not extend over the edge of the bench top.
- Maintain tools carefully. Keep them clean and dry, and store them properly after each use.
- Carry tools in a sturdy tool box to and from the worksite.
- Wear safety glasses or goggles, or a faceshield (with safety glasses or goggles) and well-fitting gloves appropriate for the hazards to which you may be exposed when doing various tasks.
- Keep the work environment clean and tidy to avoid clutter which may cause accidents.
- Use a heavy belt or apron and hang tools pointed down at your sides, not behind your back.
- Keep the work space tidy. Store tools properly when not in use.



What should I avoid when using hand tools?

- Do not use tools for jobs they are not intended to do. For example, do not use a slot screw driver as a chisel, pry bar, wedge or punch, or wrenches as hammers.
- Do not apply excessive force or pressure on tools.
- Do not cut towards yourself when using cutting tools.
- Do not hold the stock in the palm of your hand when using a cutting tool or a screwdriver. Always lay it on a workbench or in a vice.
- Do not wear bulky gloves to operate hand tools.
- Do not throw tools. Hand them, handle first, directly to other workers.
- Do not carry tools in a way that interferes with using both hands on a ladder, while climbing on a structure, or when doing any hazardous work. If working on a ladder or scaffold, tools should be raised and lowered using a bucket and hand line.
- Do not carry a sharp tool in your pocket.
- Do not use tools during electrical work unless they are designed for electrical work (e.g., properly insulated).
- Do not leave tools lying around on elevated structures such as a platform or scaffold as they may be bumped and fall.

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