

Hand Tool Safety

5-Minute Talk

Overview of topic

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations indirectly or directly mention hand tool safety in many locations. However, for construction, there are two main sources for safety information on tools. They are:

- Construction-specific rules:
 - 29 CFR 1926.300-.307-Tools, hand and power.
 - 29 CFR 1926.702-Concrete and masonry construction.
- General industry rules on hand and portable powered tools not specifically covered in the construction regulations.

The hazards of using hand tools include ergonomic hazards such as repetitive motion injuries or injuries from holding or using the tool improperly, injuries due to lack of personal protective equipment that should have been worn while using the hand tool, and injuries from the tool itself striking, cutting, or otherwise injuring the user or a nearby worker.

There are only a few specific rules regarding hand tools in the OSHA regulations at 1926.301- Hand tools. They are:

- Employers shall not issue or permit the use of unsafe hand tools.
- Wrenches, including adjustable, pipe, end, and socket, must not be used when jaws are sprung to the point that slippage occurs.
- Impact tools, such as drift pins, wedges, and chisels, must be kept free of mushroomed heads.
- The wooden handles of tools must be kept free of splinters or cracks and shall be kept tight in the tool.

These rules apply to the condition of the hand tools and not their usage, but safe usage instructions can also prevent injuries from hand tools.

Employee training

Train employees on the proper use of hand tools. The handout provided here is an overview of general rules for using hand tools. Train employees on specific information regarding the tools they work with to ensure they know how to operate their hand tools safely and effectively.



Training tips

Use the demonstration technique for hand tool training. Choose your best user of a specific tool if there is a particular point you want to emphasize regarding that tool, especially if there is an ergonomic injury hazard associated with the incorrect handling or use of the tool.

To create a dramatic effect or to get a serious point across on hand tool dangers, use a true story of an accident. An example of a severe puncture, cut, or other significant accident, can really get the point across about dangers. If it's an example from your own company or even the site itself, the point can be that much more effective.

Where to go for more information

Construction regulatory text: 29 CFR 1926.300-.307 - Tools, hand and power.

Construction regulatory text: 29 CFR 1926.702 - Concrete and masonry construction.

General industry regulatory text: 29 CFR 1910, Subpart P - Hand and portable powered tools and other hand-held equipment.

