



# Toolbox Talks

## Hand Tools



The greatest hazards posed by hand tools result from misuse and improper maintenance. Workers should be trained in the proper use and handling of tools and equipment, and this includes hand tools.

It's important to select the correct hand tool for the job. Tools are designed for specific purposes. Using a tool for something other than its intended purpose often damages the tool and could cause damage, pain, or injury.

Choose a tool that:

- is designed for the task.
- fits your hand size.
- keeps your wrist straight.
- fits in the workspace available.
- can be used in a comfortable work position.
- requires a minimum of force to use.
- has a handle that extends beyond your palm.

***OSHA Standard 1926.301(a) Employers shall not issue or permit the use of unsafe hand tools.***

➤ For tasks requiring high force, choose a tool with a handle length longer than the widest part of your hand – usually 4 to 6 inches. If the handle is too short, the end of the tool will press against the palm of your hand and may cause injury.

Workers should always be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when using hand tools, which might include safety glasses with side shields or goggles and gloves that provide adequate hand protection.

➤ If gloves are worn be sure that the hand tools being used can still be gripped easily without risk of slipping.

**Additional safety precautions to remember when using hand tools:**

- Keep workplace floors as clean and dry as possible to prevent accidental slips when using or carrying hand tools.
- Never try to fix a broken or damaged handle by taping it. Replace the handle or replace the tool.
- Keep your tools sharp, clean and in good condition.
- Ensure your work area has sufficient lighting for the task.
- Cracked saw blades should be removed from service.
- Do not leave hand tools on ladders, scaffolds or overhead workspaces.
- Store hand tools away properly when not in use.

