

# REFERENCE GUIDE

A Loss Control Service from Donegal Insurance Group



## Hand & Power Tools

### Introduction

Tools are a common part of our lives and we may forget that they can pose significant hazards to us and those working around us. Tools are manufactured with safety in mind, but the risk of an accident resulting in injury increases if we fail to take the time to recognize hazards and utilize safe work practices and necessary personal protective equipment. To prevent occurrence of a serious incident, employers and employees must work together to establish safe work practices to include hand and power tool safety.

Improperly trained staff or improperly maintained hand tools represent a serious exposure to not only the hand tool operator, but potentially anyone nearby. Examples include; a screwdriver slipping and causing a puncture wound or a damaged/loose hammer head flying off and injuring the user or a co-worker. Some common hand tools used by contractors include:

- Hammers
- Vice-Grips & Pliers
- Screw Drivers
- Box Cutters & Knives
- Manual Saws
- Hand Drills

Power tools are actuated from electrical, battery, pneumatic, gasoline, and hydraulic energy sources. Common power tools include:

- Drills (hammer drills, rotary hammer drill, stationary drill press)
- Chop/Miter-saws, circular saws, radial arm saws, reciprocating saws, band saws, chain-saws
- Sanders, Planers, and Lathes
- Laser cutting machines
- Grinding machines
- Jack hammers
- Nail guns
- Compactors

### Safety Controls

Machine guarding is a critical requirement and guards necessary in controlling employee exposures to moving parts and the point of operation of equipment and tools. Injuries from use of unguarded equipment include crushing, amputations, and death.

To reduce the risk of personal injury or property damage it's important to ensure employees know the correct tool to use for the task they need to complete along with being trained on the proper use and safety precautions needed prior to using the tool. Tools and equipment should never be modified or used improperly. Identifying the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary. Employees should be trained on and responsible for ensuring PPE is in good condition, fits properly, and does not create additional hazards (the wrong type of gloves or gloves that are too big or too small increase the potential for incidents). Training should include safe handling, transport, and storage practices.

Power tools can be more hazardous than hand tools if used improperly. Employees need to be properly trained in their use and care before operating them. Recommended training includes understanding potential hazards associated with power tools as well as the proper utilization of guards, safe operating practices, necessary PPE, along with safety precautions for adjacent co-workers. Safety precautions include:

- Never carry a power tool by the cord.
- Keep cords and hoses away from heat, oil, and sharp edges.
- Disconnect tools when not in use.
- Keep observers a safe distance away.
- Secure the work with clamps.
- Avoid accidental starting of the tool.
- Maintain tools according to manufacturers' recommendations.
- Never remove manufacturer guides or guards. Older equipment may require fabricated guarding to meet today's safety standards.

Whether using hand tools or power tools, always wear manufacturers' recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) which may include hand, eye, foot, and hearing equipment. Remove damaged tools from service as well as tag any damaged tools. OSHA has listed five (5) basic safety rules that can help prevent hazards associated with the use of hand and power tools:

- (1) Keep all tools in good condition with regular maintenance.
- (2) Use the right tool for the job.
- (3) Examine each tool for damage before use and do not use damaged tools.
- (4) Operate tools according to the manufacturers' instructions.
- (5) Provide and use the right personal protective equipment (PPE).

Employers should comply with OSHA standards that require documented training, inspection, and equipment maintenance.

## **References & Additional Information**

[Hand and Power Tools Resources](#)

[OSHA 29 CFR 1910.243 Guarding of Portable Powered Tools](#)

[OSHA 29 CFR 1926.300 Tools - Hand and Power - General Requirements](#)

[OSHA Machine Guarding 29 CFR 1910.212](#)

[OSHA Machine Guarding eTool](#)

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