

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

HAND TOOL SAFETY TIPS

You may find the need to use hand tools as part of your job duties or when working on personal projects. These can include, but are not limited to, hammers, wrenches, chisels, axes, punches, saws, screwdrivers, and pliers.

The greatest hazards when using hand tools are using the tool improperly and lack of tool maintenance. Therefore, the majority of injuries can be prevented if you pay attention to these two areas by following these tips:

- ❖ **Inspect tools before use.** Trying to use a tool that is broken or damaged could result in you getting injured, so make sure that each tool is in good working condition before using it. Is it rusty, loose, bent, cracked, dulled, or otherwise damaged? If the answer to any of these is yes, do not use it. Notify your supervisor (if on the job) and use a different tool instead.
- ❖ **Use the right size and type of tool for the job.** If you need a Phillips screwdriver, don't use a flathead one in its place. Don't use a wrench that is too big or small for the bolt. Whenever you try to fit a tool to a job it is not intended for, you run the risk of injury or damage to the tool.
- ❖ **Handle and carry tools correctly.** Carry tools in a proper holder (tool box, belt, or pouch) or by the handle with any sharp edges facing away from you; never stick sharp tools in your clothes pocket. When using a tool, hold it by its handle and maintain a good grip - never use a tool with oily or greasy hands. Be sure to keep your other hand away from the tool being used, and cut away from yourself when using anything with a blade. Hand the tool to another person rather than throwing it.
- ❖ **Use personal protective equipment (PPE) suited to the tool.** Eye protection (safety goggles or glasses), full face shields, cut-resistant or impact-resistant gloves, and safety shoes/boots are all forms of protection you can wear depending on the tool being used and the hazards that stem from its use.

