

# TRAINING GUIDE

## HAND TOOLS



2001

*Before you begin the meeting...*

- Does this topic relate to the work the crew is doing? If not, choose another topic.*
- Did you read this Training Guide and fill in the blanks where the  appears? (To find the information you need, look over the Safety Walkaround Checklist for this topic.)*
- If possible, did you bring a defective hand tool that's been removed from service to show the crew?*

*Begin:* Almost everyone in the trades has been hurt by a hand tool. We expect it to happen. We figure it will be minor. But sometimes it isn't.

Hand tools can cause serious accidents. You could even lose a finger or eye. A hand tool, from a screwdriver to an axe, is most dangerous when you misuse it or don't keep it in good repair.

Hand tools can also contribute to "ergonomic" injuries. These are injuries to the muscles, tendons, joints, and nerves. They include strains and sprains in many parts of the body, tendinitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome. Ergonomic injuries can happen right away or develop over time.

Always choose the right tool for the job. You're inviting trouble if you use a tool for a job it isn't designed to do. You can damage the tool, ruin your work, and injure yourself.

*You or a crew member may want to add a personal story about hand tools.*

*Next, point out a few hand tool hazards you have noticed at this particular job site:*



### ASK THE CREW THESE QUESTIONS:

*After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.*

#### **1. What safety rules should you keep in mind when you use hand tools?**

- Use the right tool for the job. Never use a tool for a job it wasn't designed to do. Make sure you're familiar with your tools and know how to use them properly.
- Select tools that fit the hand comfortably, have soft grips that don't cut into your hand, and are not too heavy.

- Keep secure footing and balance when you use tools. The area where you're standing shouldn't be slippery or cluttered.
- Use tools on a stable work surface. Hold the work with a vise or clamps if necessary.
- Use tools in a well-lighted area.
- Avoid awkward positions when using hand tools. Some tools are poorly designed and force you to work with unnecessary strain on your wrists, arm, shoulder, or back. Use tools with a better design. For example, a longer handle can minimize reaching. Sometimes an angle between the handle and tool can help keep your wrist straight.
- Make sure you have enough space to work, and can keep your body at a comfortable angle to the work. Adjust the position of the tool, or the orientation of the work surface, to minimize bending your wrist or body, reaching, or twisting.
- Keep tools where they belong. Never leave them on a ladder, scaffold, or overhead work space. Keep them where they won't fall on someone or trip someone up.
- Carry tools properly. Use a tool belt, especially when you're on a ladder. But be sure your tool belt isn't too heavy. It may strain your lower back and hips. Carry only essential tools.

## 2. How do you make sure your tools stay in safe condition?

- Keep tools clean. Keep them away from water, oil, chemicals, and hot surfaces that may damage them.
- Inspect your tools every day before you use them. Check them for sharpness, chips, "mushrooming," wear, and metal fatigue. Also make sure that bolts, nuts, and screws are tight.
- Remove damaged or defective tools from service. Tag them: DO NOT USE.
- If the company owns the defective tool, turn it in after you tag it. It will be repaired or disposed of.

On this job site, turn in defective tools to—

*Give name and location:* \_\_\_\_\_

- If you own the defective tool yourself, take it to your car or truck immediately after you tag it. Remove it from the site as soon as possible.
- Never use damaged or defective tools until they have been properly repaired.

## 3. What precautions should you take when using saw blades, knives, or other sharp tools?

- Keep blades, knives, scissors, and other sharp tools sharp. Dull tools are more hazardous than sharp ones.
- Let the cutting surface do the work—don't force it.
- Keep your knife in a sheath.
- With any sharp tool, always cut away from yourself. (Except with draw knives.)
- Stay alert.



**4. Do you need to use special tools when you work near a flammable substance?**

- Yes. It's safer to use special spark resistant tools near any highly flammable substance (whether it's a gas, vapor, or liquid).
- Ordinary iron or steel hand tools can produce sparks when you use them. Spark resistant tools are usually made of brass, plastic, aluminum, or wood.

We  will or  will not require spark resistant tools on this site.

*(If applicable:)*

We need them in these jobs and locations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**5. What protective equipment might you need when you work with hand tools?**

You may need:

- Safety glasses, goggles, or other eye protection.
- Wire mesh gloves and an apron if there's a risk of cuts.
- Steel-toed safety shoes if there's a chance of injuring your feet.
- Boots if you're working in a wet area.
- Hearing protection (ear plugs or ear muffs) if your work will create a lot of noise.

On this job, we require you to use the following protective equipment when working with hand tools.

List types required on the site, and where to obtain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



- If you have to use any of the personal protective equipment (PPE) that we've discussed, the company is required to supply it and train you in its use.

**CAL/OSHA REGULATIONS**

*Explain:* Most of the safety measures we've talked about are required by Cal/OSHA. We have to take these precautions—it's the law. Also, Cal/OSHA recently adopted a new ergonomics standard. On any construction job, if there has been more than one ergonomic injury within a year to workers doing the same task, the company must take steps to identify and correct these hazards. We must also provide relevant training. I have a Checklist of the Cal/OSHA regulations on hand tools. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting.

## **COMPANY RULES**

*(Only if applicable.)* Besides the Cal/OSHA regulations, we have some additional company rules about hand tools.

*Discuss company rules:* \_\_\_\_\_



## **COMMENTS FROM THE CREW**

*Ask:* Do you have any other concerns about hand tools? Do you see any problems on our job?  
*(Let the steward answer first, if there is one.)*

What about other jobs you've worked on? Have you had any experience with hand tools that might help us work safer on this job?

