

# Using Hand Tools Safely

Hand tools may be a familiar part of your everyday work life. For this reason, it's easy to forget that they can be dangerous if used or maintained improperly. For example, a simple screwdriver can slip and cause a puncture wound, and a cracked or loose head on a hammer can fly off and hit you or a bystander. Know and practice the safety rules for hand tools.



## HAND TOOL SAFETY TIPS

-  Use the right tool for the job and make sure it's the correct size for the job. When you use a wrench as a hammer, or a knife as a screwdriver, you risk damaging the tool, the material you're working on or yourself.
-  Keep your tools in good working order. A clean, sharp tool is a safe tool. A tool with a greasy handle or dull cutting surface can slip and cause injury.
-  Learn the correct way to use your tools. Ask how to use new or unfamiliar tools—never assume you know how.
-  Never modify a tool to increase its leverage or force.
-  Wear the proper protective equipment for the job, such as mesh gloves, a leather apron and sleeve guards when using knives.
-  Follow common-sense tool rules such as: Always cutting away from yourself, and pulling on a wrench, rather than pushing it.
-  Use tools with awareness and patience.
-  Never horse around or daydream while using tools.
-  Store tools in a clean, dry place to keep them free from rust, grease and dust.
-  Carry tools with sharp parts pointed down and away from you.

# Using Power Tools Safely

Power tools make it possible to do many tasks quickly and efficiently. But because they use electricity and have fast-moving parts, you must exercise extra caution when using them. Follow these safety rules when using power tools:

## POWER TOOL SAFETY TIPS

- Wear the proper personal protective equipment for the job.
- Before you use it, inspect the tool for broken parts, loose bolts, defective or broken cord insulation, plugs or switches, or improper connections.
- Only use equipment that is in good condition.
- Keep your work area free of debris.
- Use tools in well-lit areas.
- Never use electric tools where flammable vapors or gases are present.
- Report unsafe conditions, such as defective cord insulation, poor connections to terminals, broken switches or plugs, sparking or overheating equipment, and outlets without GFCIs in damp areas.
- Never carry a power tool by the cord or hose.
- Disconnect tools before changing accessories, such as blades, bits or cutters, and before servicing or inspecting them.
- Secure your work material with clamps or a vise if possible.
- Avoid wearing clothing or jewelry that may become caught in a tool.
- Report equipment as unsafe if it has insulation defects, if it sparks or if you feel any shock or tingling when using it.
- Start and end from “off.” Make sure the power switch is off before plugging in equipment. When you’re finished, turn the equipment off before unplugging it to protect yourself and the next user.
- Never horseplay around power tools.
- When you turn off a tool, let it stop completely before putting it down in a safe place.
- Avoid kinking, cutting or crushing any electrical cord.
- If equipment has a three-prong plug, use a three-slot outlet or extension cord.
- Never modify three prongs to fit two slots by removing the third prong. Use an adapter instead, making sure that the metal grounding piece on the adapter is connected to a grounded object, such as the screw on the receptacle cover plate.
- Avoid overstraining equipment by using it improperly.
- Service equipment regularly and repair or replace it as needed.
- Pay attention to the direction of the tool’s rotation. You’re responsible for seeing that no one is in the path of flying objects.
- Use the switch lock only when the tool is in a stand or jig.
- Make sure you have solid footing when you’re using heavy tools or working at an awkward angle, such as overhead.



- Test the tool before you use it. For example, for a cutting tool, test its sharpness with a piece of wood, not your fingers.
- To prevent shock, make sure your tool is properly grounded and double-insulated.
- Keep power cords away from heat, sharp objects and chemicals that could damage their insulation.
- Be sure to keep your work area dry.
- Never use electrical equipment when your hands are wet or any part of you is touching water.
- If you must work in a wet area, keep the power cord clear of wet surfaces and use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

