

Hand tool maintenance

Hand tools are manually powered tools, and include anything from axes to wrenches. The greatest hazards posed by hand tools result from misuse and improper maintenance.

Some safety scenarios include the following:

- If a chisel is used as a screwdriver, the tip of the chisel may break and fly off, hitting the user or other employees
- If a wooden handle, such as on a hammer or axe, is loose, splintered, or cracked, the head of the tool may fly off and strike the user or other employees
- If the jaws of a wrench are sprung, the wrench might slip
- If impact tools such as chisels, wedges, or drift pins have mushroomed heads, the heads might shatter on impact, sending sharp fragments flying toward the user or other employees

The employer is responsible for the safe condition of tools and equipment used by employees. Employers shall not issue or permit the use of unsafe hand tools. Employees should be trained in the proper use and handling of tools and equipment.

Using hand tools

When using saw blades, knives, or other tools, employees should direct the tools away from aisle areas and away from other employees working in proximity. Knives and scissors must be sharp; dull tools can cause more hazards than sharp ones. Cracked saw blades must be removed from service.

Wrenches must not be used when jaws are sprung to the point that slippage occurs. Impact tools such as drift pins, wedges, and chisels must be kept free of mushroomed heads. The wooden handles of tools must not be splintered.

Iron or steel hand tools may produce sparks that can be an ignition source around flammable substances. Where this hazard exists, spark-resistant tools made of non-ferrous materials should be used where flammable gases, highly volatile liquids, and other explosive substances are stored or used.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA 3080 Hand and Power Tools

The information and recommendations contained in this material have been obtained from sources believed to be reliable. However, SECURA accepts no legal responsibility for the accuracy, sufficiency, or completeness of such information. Additional safety and health procedures may be required under particular circumstances. Please talk with your SECURA Risk Management Consultant for more information.

