

▶ POWER TOOL SAFETY

14

Things to Do Before Training

- Have on hand an electrical power tool that's used on the job site and any protective equipment that should be worn while using it (e.g., eye or hearing protection).
- Read the manufacturer's instructions for the tool, if available.
- Bring any examples you have of power tools or cords that should not be used because they are unsafe.

Introduction

Most of us use power tools every day without getting hurt. But because they're powerful, these tools have some serious potential hazards workers need to be aware of.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Have you or anyone you know had an injury or "near miss" while working with power tools? What happened? What could have been done to prevent it?
- What are other injuries that could occur when using power tools?
- Which electrical tools are we using on this job? Have you seen any problems with them?
- What should you check before turning on a tool [*hold up tool*]?
- What shortcuts that could pose a safety hazard should we avoid when using power tools?
- What protective gear should we wear when using this tool?

SAFETY  BREAK

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Inspect sample tools and cords used on the job. Show examples of unsafe tools or cords, if you have them.
- Show proper grounding and/or labels indicating double insulation.
- See if all of the workers have the appropriate protective gear to be used with the tool. If not, arrange for the company to provide it.

Key Points to Keep in Mind

- Hazards from power tool use include** injury from the tool itself (e.g., cut, amputation, sprain/strain), electric shock, eye damage from flying materials, and hearing loss.

Things to check before tool use:

- Check that the tool is in good condition and **guards** or **safety devices** have not been removed or tampered with.
- Inspect tool cords and extension cords** daily for kinks, cuts, cracked or broken insulation, and makeshift repairs.
- Tools must be properly **grounded** (3-prong plug plugged into 3-hole receptacle) or double insulated (look for labeling—a D, a D inside square, double square, etc.).
- Use GFCI circuits.

During tool use:

- Don't take short cuts such as removing safety devices, changing parts while the tool is plugged in, or sawing materials that are not adequately braced.
- Hold the tool firmly** and have the material well secured (e.g., set up horses for using a power saw safely rather than cutting on your knee).
- Keep **cords clear** of the tool.
- Keep your **balance** and be careful not to overreach.
- Always **disconnect the tool** from the power source before making adjustments or changing attachments.
- Don't use the cord to carry the tool or disconnect the tool by yanking on the cord (damages the cord and increases risk of shock).
- Report any shocks** from tools or cords to your supervisor (minor shocks or tingling can be a warning of fatal shocks later).
- Use appropriate eye and hearing protection.