

Hand Tools and Portable Power Tools



All portable power tools used by our employees shall be electrically safe. They shall be double insulated or have a 3-wire plug with the ground intact. Any tool with damaged parts, frayed cords, faulty switches, etc. will be removed from service until repairs are made. All guards must be installed and in good working condition. Always unplug the tool when working on it or changing attachments. Although lock-on buttons are legal, they can be dangerous and extra caution is required. After using a tool, make sure all parts have stopped moving before you set it down. Tools like sidewinder grinders will “coast” for a long time and will jump if they are set down still moving.

Gasoline powered tools and equipment present special hazards. Gasoline is highly explosive and flammable. The exhaust contains carbon monoxide and is toxic. These tools can only be used in ventilated areas. The blade and the metal being cut with an abrasive saw can get very hot and present a burn hazard. Lastly, when starting up make sure that the blade is clear because it may be activated immediately upon starting.

Hand tools also require correct usage. Employees shall store and carry tools properly. Always use the correct tool, especially one big enough for the job. Keep the tools in good condition. Watch for cracked handles, dull blades, and worn parts on adjustable wrenches. If possible, use a fixed wrench because it is less apt to slip. Always support your work. Drilling into a small piece of metal can cause it to spin dangerously if the bit catches. Always remember to protect your off-hand. That’s the one that gets hit by the hammer, gouged by the screwdriver, and cut by the tin snip. Keep your free hand clear of the tool. When working with tools on a ladder, do not over reach. If the tool catches, you could drop it or fall yourself. Never extend tool handles with “cheaters”.

There are many types of tools used in the electrical construction business today. If a tool is new to our employees, we want them to notify a supervisor so they can receive some instruction. This is especially true to power tools and powder actuated tools.

Common electrical industry tools such as power benders and pipe threaders are not particularly dangerous, but workers will review the manual and go through tool specific training before operations begin.

An electrician’s fish tape for “fishing” wire into conduit is a specialty tool that requires some extra precautions. When pushed into an energized panel, these metal tapes need to be protected from contacting live parts.