

SAFETY MEETING TOPIC

This form shall be completed and kept on file

Job Name _____ Location _____ Job No. _____
Meeting Leader _____ Title _____
Date Held _____ Place _____ Time _____
Subject of Meeting _____ POWER TOOL HAZARDS

The use of power tools is very extensive in the construction industry. Because of this, you need to be aware of the dangers associated with tool use. Most power tool accidents happen because of improper use, poor maintenance or lack of concentration. The use of any tool demands attention from the user.

The power used to run a tool can be just as dangerous as the tool's moving parts. Every year hundreds of workers become victims of electrical shock. Electric power cords create tripping hazards and can be dragged across switches or into the path of moving parts.

Electricity is not the only source of energy for power tools. You may use compressed air to operate nailers and other equipment. This air pressure, when uncontrolled, can puncture skin or dislodge an eye. Gas driven equipment such as generators need fuel in order to operate. Fuels create the added hazards of burns, explosions and chemical exposure.

TOOL SAFEGUARDS

The American National Standards Institute has identified the most common hazards associated with tool use and identified effective safeguards. Most electric tools are double insulated, others are equipped with ground plugs. Both features are there to help prevent electrical shock.

Belt sanders, drills, saber saws and other similarly operated power tools must be equipped with a momentary contact "on-off" control. These may also be equipped with a lock-on control for extended use. Tools which pose a lower level of hazard, such as a detail sander, may be equipped with a positive "on-off" switch. Always be aware that these tools will continue to run until switched off. Power tools that pose a higher degree of hazard, such as circular saws must have a constant contact switch. When the switch is released the tool will shut off.

Pneumatic tools have a variety of safeguard features. Some systems are equipped with safety valves that automatically regulate the pressure should the hose fail. Devices that secure the tools to the hose or whip prevent them from being accidentally dislodged.

Several types of power saws are equipped with guards, but even then the blade is never completely covered. Circular saws have a housing over the top half of the blade and a self-adjusting guard for the lower half. Many jig saws are designed so that the blade is surrounded by the shoe or base plate and operate with a minimum amount of blade exposure above the work surface. In some cases, the tool is designed so that maximum control is maintained for safety during operation. Routers, equipped with dual handles, are one such tool.

You should be familiar with your tools' safety features as well as the limits they offer with regard to protection. Operating tools beyond the range of that protection must be prohibited. Avoid using tools that are not equipped with modern safeguards. If such tools must be used, additional precautions and training should be offered to recognize and protect against the added hazard.