

TOOLBOX TALK

Power tools toolbox talk

About six minutes · Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

SITE

DATE

GIVEN BY

WHY IT MATTERS

HSE lists the ways moving machinery hurts people: struck by moving parts or by material thrown out, hands drawn in, cuts and severed fingers, crushing, burns, and electric shock. A hand-held power tool can do every one of those, and it does it inches from the hand holding the work.

HSE says injuries are more likely when tools become unreliable and develop faults, and when they are used by people without the experience or training for them. Most power tool injuries happen on ordinary jobs, with the wrong tool, a guard that was pinned back, or a blade changed with the tool still plugged in. This talk is about the habits that stop them.

HSE, Using machinery safely: introduction

THE POINTS TO MAKE

- ☐ **The right tool for the job**

Use the tool made for the task, at the right size and power. An undersized tool takes longer, works harder and is more likely to bind or kick. A tool used for something it was not designed for, such as a grinder with a wood-cutting blade, is a serious injury waiting to happen. If you have not used a tool before, ask to be shown before you start.
- ☐ **Check it before you start**

Every time, look over the tool before you use it. Body not cracked, guard present and working, blade or bit sharp and fitted properly, switch working and springing back to off, lead not cut, crushed or taped, plug not damaged, and the test label in date where the site uses one. Anything wrong, and the tool is labelled and taken out of use, not just put back in the van.
- ☐ **Guards stay on**

Guards, riving knives and safety switches are there to keep your hands away from the blade and to catch what flies off. Never wedge a saw guard open, tie back a trigger lock or remove a guard to make a cut easier. If a guard gets in the way of the job, the job needs a different tool or a different method, not a missing guard.
- ☐ **Leads, 110V and batteries**

On site, corded tools run on 110V from a transformer, not straight from a 230V socket. Keep leads off the floor where they can be cut, away from water and sharp edges, and never carry a tool by its lead. Charge batteries on the charger made for them, away from combustibles, and take damaged or swollen batteries out of use; they can catch fire.
- ☐ **Kickback and pinching**

Saws and grinders kick back when the blade pinches or snags. Support the work so the cut opens rather than closes, clamp small pieces instead of holding them, keep both hands on the tool, and stand to one side of the line of the cut. Let the tool come up to speed before it touches the work, and let it stop before you put it down.
- ☐ **Isolate before you touch**

Before changing a blade, bit or disc, clearing a jam or making an adjustment, switch off and unplug it or take the battery out. A trigger knocked while your fingers are on the blade is how fingers are lost. Use the chuck key or spanner made for the tool, take it out before you start again, and never leave a running tool unattended.
- ☐ **Dust, noise and vibration**

The cut is not the only hazard. Cutting, drilling and sanding make dust, often silica or wood dust, so use on-tool extraction or water and the mask the task needs. Many tools are loud enough to need hearing protection. Vibrating tools damage hands over time, so keep to the trigger times. Wear eye protection whenever a tool can throw anything.

SITE	DOCUMENT Power tools toolbox talk	REVISION	DATE	PAGE 1 of 3
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TOOLBOX TALK, CONTINUED

Power tools toolbox talk: do, do not, and the questions

DO

- Pick the right tool for the job, and ask to be shown if it is new to you.
- Check the tool, guard, lead or battery and the blade before every use.
- Use 110V tools on site and keep leads off the floor and away from water.
- Clamp or support the work and keep both hands on the tool.
- Unplug or remove the battery before changing a blade or clearing a jam.
- Use the extraction, eye protection and hearing protection the job needs.

DO NOT

- Do not remove, wedge or tie back a guard, or override a safety switch.
- Do not use a tool with a damaged lead, plug, body or battery.
- Do not carry a tool by its lead or yank the plug out by the cable.
- Do not hold small work in your hand while you cut or drill it.
- Do not put a tool down while it is still running.
- Do not fit a blade or disc the tool was not designed for.

ASK THE TEAM

- ? Which power tools are we using on this job, and has everyone been shown how to use them?
- ? When did you last check the lead and plug on the tool you use most?
- ? Has anyone seen a guard taped, wedged or missing on site?
- ? Where do we charge batteries, and what do we do with a damaged one?
- ? How are we controlling the dust from cutting and drilling here?

TO CLOSE

Power tools are so much a part of the job that it is easy to forget how fast they hurt people. Most injuries come from a few shortcuts: the wrong tool, a guard pinned back, a lead that should have been binned, a blade changed with the power still on. So pick the right tool, check it every time, keep the guards on, isolate before you touch the blade, and deal with the dust and noise. If a tool is damaged, label it and tell us. We will replace it.

Record it. Who gave the talk, where, when, who was there and what was raised. The last page is the record.

SITE	DOCUMENT Power tools toolbox talk	REVISION	DATE	PAGE 2 of 3
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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Power tools toolbox talk: given and understood

Each person signs on the day to say they were present and understood the talk. Anyone who joins the team later is given the talk before starting, and signs here.

SITE	DATE	TIME	GIVEN BY
NAME	COMPANY	TRADE OR ROLE	SIGNATURE

QUESTIONS RAISED, AND THE ANSWERS GIVEN	ACTIONS AGREED, WHO AND BY WHEN	
TALK GIVEN BY (SIGNATURE)	POSITION	DATE

MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK REGULATIONS 1999, REGULATION 10: INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES