

Work Safely With Hand Tools

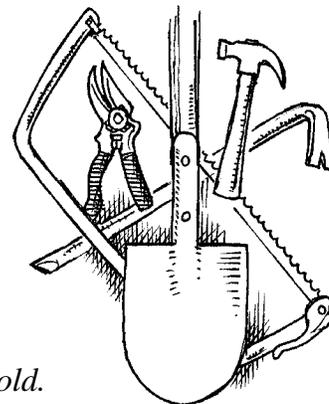
Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- Most hand tool injuries can be prevented.
- Always use the right tool for the job.
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment when using hand tools.
- Return all tools to their proper location.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Bring to your training session samples of the [gloves](#), [safety glasses](#) or other personal protective equipment you provide workers who use hand tools.



Hand tools can be dangerous

- Hand tools such as chisels, shovels, handsaws, hammers, knives, cutters and pruning shears may seem pretty easy to use.
- But they can also be very dangerous if you're not careful.
- Injuries from hand tools are generally due to:
 - using the wrong tool for the job,
 - using a broken or damaged tool,
 - improperly using a tool,
 - not wearing personal protective equipment,
 - not paying attention to what you're doing, or
 - being in too big of a hurry.
- Hand tool injuries may include:
 - cuts, bruises or puncture wounds
 - eye injuries from flying chips or other debris
 - damage to the nerve in the wrist from repeated use of a tool while bending your wrist
- Other serious injuries may include:
 - broken bones, resulting from a tool that slips, falls, or is thrown
 - severed fingers from knife or saw blade cuts



Pay attention when you are using hand tools.

Before you use a tool

1. Check the area to make sure anyone who could get hurt is out of the way.
2. Be sure your lighting is sufficient.
3. Carefully inspect the tool for cracks, rust, wear or other damage. Make sure handles are secure and free of oil and grease. See that things move freely and that blades are sharp.
4. Don't use a damaged or broken tool. Report any problems to your supervisor and get a different tool.



Don't use damaged tools.

(Continued on back)

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

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Safe use of hand tools

- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when using hand tools. Depending on your specific task, this may include [gloves](#), [shielded safety glasses or goggles](#), or other PPE. See your supervisor if you have any questions.

Note to trainer: Show trainees samples of the PPE you provide and tell them which tools the PPE may be used with.

- Wear [long pants](#), a [long-sleeved shirt](#), [socks](#), and sturdy [shoes](#) with non-slip soles. Don't wear loose clothing or jewelry that could get caught by the tool. Tie long hair back, and keep your shirt tucked in.
- Always use the right tool for the job.
- Don't use a tool that's oily, greasy, or too heavy for you to safely handle.
- Plant your feet firmly, and don't lose your grip.
- Be sure to cut or chip away from your body.
- Keep your wrist straight, and don't use a tool while you're in an awkward position.
- Take breaks, and avoid repetitive tasks over prolonged periods of time.



Carrying and storing tools

1. Never carry sharp tools or tools with pointed edges in your pockets.
2. Carry tools in a tool belt or a tool box.
3. Don't carry a tool so it obstructs your vision.
4. Pass tools to other people by their handles.
5. Clean off tools before putting them away. Be sure any guards or safety devices are in place when you carry tools and when you put them away.
6. Store tools in a dry, secure location. Don't pile them in a drawer, leave them on a bench, or place them where someone could get hurt.
7. Store tools with sharp points separately from other tools.



Are there any questions?

*Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the **Hand Tool Safety Do's and Don'ts**.*

HAND TOOL SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Stay alert when using hand tools.
- Make sure you have enough light.
- Talk to your supervisor if you are uncertain how to safely use a tool.

DON'T:

- Carry tools in your hands when going up or down a ladder or steep stairs.
- Ever throw a tool or engage in horseplay when using a tool.
- Expose a tool to extreme heat or place it near moving machinery.

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