 Heavy Construction Contractors Association 

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**TOOLBOX TALK: HAND AND POWER TOOL SAFETY**

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The danger of hand and power tools is evident in the 400,000 emergency room visits they account for each year. But many of those emergency room visits are caused by misusing tools and not working safely. When used correctly and with the proper safety measures, you can significantly reduce the chance of an accident.

**General Safety Tips For Hand and Power Tools:**

* Buy quality tools. Many tools, including cutters and hammers, should be made of steel and should be heat-treated.
* Regularly inspect tools to make sure they are in good shape and fit for use.
* Be sure to maintain your tools by performing regular maintenance, like grinding or sharpening. Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
* Dress for the job by avoiding loose clothing or articles that can get caught in a tool’s moving parts, like jewelry.
* Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, like leather gloves.
* Use the right tool for the job. In other words, don’t try to use a wrench as a hammer.
* Make sure that your feet are planted on a stable surface.
* Be aware of the people around you and make sure they stay clear of the tools you are using.
* Never carry tools up a ladder by hand. Instead, use a bucket or bag to hoist tools from the ground to the worker.
* When working at heights, never leave tools lying out in the areas where they could present a hazard to workers below.
* When appropriate, secure work with a clamp or vise to keep it from slipping.
* Never carry pointed tools in your pocket. Carry them in a toolbox or cart instead.
* Inspect your tools on a regular basis, checking for damage. Report damaged tools to your supervisor.
* Make sure to keep extra tools handy in case the tool you had planned to use is damaged.
* Make sure tools are stored in a safe place.

**Safety Tips For Electric Power Tools:**

* Keep floors dry and clean to avoid slipping while working with or around dangerous tools.
* Keep cords from presenting a tripping hazard.
* Never carry a power tool by its cord.
* Use tools that are double-insulated or have a three-pronged cord and are plugged into a grounded receptacle.
* Do not use electric tools in wet conditions unless they are approved for that use.
* Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) or an assured grounding program.
* Use appropriate PPE.

**Safety Tips For Pneumatic Tools:**

* Verify that all parts of the tool are fastened securely before use.
* Never point a compressed air gun at yourself or another person.
* When you are finished using the tool, make sure that the pressure is released before you break the hose connections.
* Use a safety clip or retainer to prevent attachments from being ejected during operation, and use a chip guard when using high-pressure compressed air for cleaning. Be sure to limit the nozzle pressure to 30 pounds per square inch.
* Always wear eye protection.
* Use screens to protect nearby workers from flying fragments.
* Never leave your tool unattended.
* Never store a loaded air gun.

“ALWAYS REMEMBER, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF OTHERS AROUND YOU!”