
WEEKLY TOOLBOX TALK: UTILITY KNIFE SAFETY

Posted by Jorge Vazquez on May 29, 2019

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There's one hand tool that demands your respect over many others in the workplace, a tool that can cut you to the bone in an instant . . . the utility knife.

Many workers use utility knives to cut drywall, ceiling tile, strapping, puncture shrink wrap and open packaging. But one wrong move and these blades can do serious harm.

In fact, nearly 40 percent of all injuries attributed to manual workshop tools in the US involve utility knives. Many accidents involving utility knives occur for the following reasons:

- ? Drawing the knife towards you instead of away from your body
- ? Working with a dull blade. (Dull blades require more pressure, increasing the potential for injury)
- ? Trying to cut more than the knife can handle
- ? Improperly storing the knife with the blade extended
- ? Failing to wear personal protective equipment
- ? Neglecting to inspect the tool before use

There have been cases where workers have suffered injuries from exposed blade tips. This is because the blades did not completely retract into the handle if it was a retractable blade. In our case, we use fix blades, but where we store them is also important. We recently had an incident where an employee placed his utility knife inside a tool bag and when he put his hand inside the bag and he suffered a cut.

Use:

- ? A knife is used for cutting, and cutting only
- ? Never use a knife as a screwdriver or prying tool
- ? Always make cuts away from your body
- ? Do not use too much pressure to cut
- ? Never use a defective knife – such as one with a broken handle, blade or lock system
- ? Always be sure the knife is sharp
- ? Dull knives lead to injury because more pressure is needed to make the cut and this can result in slips
- ? Never throw a knife

Protection:

- ? If you have to make cuts close to your body, be sure to wear the proper PPE to avoid injury
- ? Gloves and Kevlar sleeves are available for certain cutting applications

Storage:

- ? Always carry a knife in its sheath
- ? Never leave a knife uncovered on a table or workbench
- ? Always store the knife with the cutting edge down or covered, keep it on the pouch and not exposed.

First Aid:

- ? Treat even the smallest cut
- ? Blood Poisoning or infections can develop if cuts are not treated properly

Make sure you are using the right knife for the job. A good sharp knife should cut without difficulty, allowing you to get the job done quickly and safely.

REMEMBER!! Utility knives are extremely handy on the job, but they can also be handy in causing serious injuries.

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safety

Toolbox Talk:

Tools

Hazard Recognition

Accident Prevention

