Hand Tool Inspections Meeting Kit

There are many injuries while using hand tools on the job. Many of these injuries occur from improper use, but there are also injuries that involve a tool that was broken or in need of repair. What tool is being used will decide what needs to be inspected on it.

Common hand tools found on almost every jobsite and at home across the country are screw drivers, hammers, chisels, and wrenches.

These simple tools can be hazardous and have the potential for causing severe injuries when used or maintained improperly. Special attention toward hand and power tool safety is necessary in order to reduce or eliminate these hazards.

Hand tools and the use of hand tools seems simple and straight-forward; therefore, few employers provide any training in hand tool safety. Likewise, few employers conduct formal tool inspections. However, employees are frequently injured by using unsafe tools or by using tools improperly.

TYPES OF HAND TOOLS

Hand tools come in different sizes and functionalities, here are the most common hand tools being used today:

- Measuring Tools
- Long tapes, tape rules etc…
- Finishing Tools
- Putty knives, scrapes, specialized tools and blades
- Striking and Struck Tools
- Hammers (sledge, soft face, specialty, nail, framing), chisels (including wood), punches.
- Layout Tools
- Levels, squares, chalk line reels and chalk, accessories and marking
- Fastening Tools
- Pliers, screwdrivers, wrenches, nut drivers and ratchets, staplers and tacks, staples and brad nails, glue guns and glue sticks, riveters and grommets
- Cutting Tools
- Knife blades, knives, planes, saw blades, hacksaws, accessories, snips and saws
- Automotive Tools
- Mechanics tool sets, ratchets and accessories, wrenches and wrench sets

INSPECTION/TRAINING PROCESS

Employers are responsible for safe condition of all tools regardless of the owner.

They could be tools provided by the employer, workers' personal tools or those belonging to contractors-the employer must make sure that all are in safe condition. This implies tool inspection of some sort. Employers should assign someone to be responsible to make sure all tools are in good condition and unsafe tools are removed from service. Users should also be trained to know when to take a tool out of service.

Workers must be trained to inspect tools and replace them when they become unsafe. The employer should conduct random toolbox inspections to check the condition of tools and any signs of tool misuse.

COMMON HAND TOOL INSPECTION ITEMS

Hammers– Ensure that the handle is not broken or chipped. If a handle is taped, more than likely it is broken and needs replaced. On any tool, tape is not a manufacturer's approved fix for a needed repair. Ensure the head of the hammer is tight on the handle. Throw the hammer away if part of the claw is broken off.

Screwdrivers– Ensure the handle is not chipped or broken. Many people will use the screwdriver as a chisel and hit the back end of it with a hammer. This causes damage to the screwdriver and will damage the handle. If the head of the screwdriver is chipped or worn down, replace the screwdriver.

Chisels– Chisels are strong tools, but just like any other tool they will begin to break down over time. Check the back of the chisel. Often times, the back will begin to mushroom. When mushrooming occurs the chisel either needs to be repaired properly or replaced.

Wrenches– Check that the wrench is not bent. Replace any wrench that is chipped or excessively worn. Losing the grip on a bolt due to a worn or broken wrench can easily cause hand injuries to the user.

TOOL SAFETY BASICS TO SHARE WITH WORKERS

- To ensure your employees avoid accidents when working with hand tools, the following points should be covered during training:
- Always keep tools in good condition with regular maintenance. Dirty tools can be more difficult to use.
- Use the right tool for the job and use it properly. Never use a hand tool for something it was not designed to do.
- Inspect each tool for damage before using it and never use a damaged tool. If tools are properly maintained, inspecting them shouldn't take long at all. However, do not assume that all tools are in good condition.
- Operate tools according to manufacturer's instructions. When using a tool you've never used before, review the instructions. This is the best source of information. If the instructions are not available, talk to a co-worker who uses the tool frequently or ask your supervisor for help. Also, find out exactly what types of safety precautions are built into the device and test them to make sure they are operating correctly.
- Use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Gloves and safety glasses or goggles are almost always necessary, although many tools will require additional PPE.
- Make sure you have selected the right size hand tool for the job. You want a secure fit between the tool and the material. A screwdriver that is too big for a particular screw can slip off the screw head, resulting in a nasty puncture wound.

FINAL WORD

Hand tool inspections often fall between the cracks!! The reason-more attention is given to power tool safety. Injuries caused by hand tools is understated as evidence

by lack of formal hand tool inspection.