



Powered for safety

Use caution when using the tools of the trade

The accident: One man in a five-man crew was using a jackhammer, which was connected to an extension cord. The jackhammer's worn extension cord came into contact with standing rainwater, and the man, who was not wearing company-issued rubber boots, was electrocuted. The worker later died after being transferred to a local hospital.

The bottom line: The most frequent injuries involving power tools are cuts, punctures, electric shock, burns and eye damage. When working with power tools, make sure you clean and check the tools regularly. Use all machine guards – never wedge a guard open.

Make sure every electrical tool is grounded or double insulated. Disconnect the power source before adjusting, oiling, or changing blades, cutters or accessories. Always replace the guards.

When using temporary extension cords, make sure they are protected and do not present a tripping hazard. Check the insulation of wires of power tools you are using daily, in addition to couplings on pneumatic and hydraulic hoses. Here are some tool-specific cautions:

Saws: Even though the saw is guarded, always use a push stick to push work past the saw blade. Stop circular saws completely before approaching them for adjustment. Idling saws can cause amputations.



Illustration by Don Lomax

Drills: Before using a drill, make sure it will not strike electric wires, gas lines or high-pressure lines. Make sure the chuck key is removed before starting.

Grinders: Inspect the grinding wheel or disc, since a cracked wheel or disc could fly into pieces. Replace a worn wheel with a new wheel of the proper rpm rating. Keep grinding wheels or discs dry.

Powder-actuated tools: Tools must always be left unloaded until ready for use. Drive studs a safe distance from the edge of the material. Use only the tool manufacturer's suggest load, and always use proper cartridges and studs for the work.

Pneumatic tools: Wear safety goggles to guard against flying chips, and use respiratory protection in dusty conditions. **EW**

Information for this Safety Watch was gathered from news reports of an actual accident and Construction Tool Box Safety Talks, produced by the Associated General Contractors

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