
TOOLBOX TALK

Safe Use of Power Tools

Overview:

Power tool safety should never be taken lightly. Regardless of your level of experience, understanding and implementing correct safety measures is of utmost importance. Power tools create hazards such as noise, vibration, electrical, moving parts and projectiles. When accidents occur with power tools, they can cause severe injuries and even fatality.

The power tool you use should be suitable for the job. The right tool will get the job done quicker. Using the wrong tool for a task can create mechanical and electrical stress that causes the equipment to become unsafe. Always keep your tool maintained and tested following the manufacturer's guidelines. Tools that are well maintained will last longer and be safer to use.

Electrical Safety:

- Use battery tools wherever possible. Only recharge your batteries using the charger supplied by the manufacturer to avoid the risk of fire.
- All 110v and 240v powered tools i.e. dust extractors and battery chargers must be fully PAT tested.
- Ensure that power tools are in a good working condition and that leads, plugs and tool casings are free from damage at all times. Any tools with damage must not be used.
- Never use power tools near any potential short circuit such as water.
- Use a cable/pipe detector to avoid drilling into pipes/cables. All new build properties will have RCD protected circuits to protect you in the event that a cable is drilled through, but in older retail properties, circuits may not always be RCD protected, so extra care must be taken.
- Disconnect all power tools from the power source when not in use.



Cables:

- Before using cabled power tools, always check the electrical cable is not damaged and has not been repaired with insulating tape or using an unsuitable connector. Damaged cable should be replaced with a new cable by a competent person.
- When using power tools with cables, be sure to position any trailing cables so that they are not a trip hazard and are less likely to get damaged.
- Ensure the cable is long enough to reach your work without straining it. Always unwind cables from a tight coil or extension reel. Coiled cables can overheat, which could cause a fire.



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Tool Guards:

- All power tool guards must be fitted and function correctly at all times, check they move freely.
- Guards must not be tampered with, removed or modified in any way. The guards are important as they only expose the required amount of blade to cut the material.
- Damaged guards must be repaired or replaced before the power tool is used.
- Always use the correct attachments i.e. grips and handles



Blades and Drill Bits:

- All blades and drill bits should be sharp, in good condition and free from damage.
- Blunt blades and drill bits can result in increased resistance and stress on the power tool. In the case of a circular saw, this could result in 'kick-back', which could cause an accident.
- When changing blades or drill bits, always remove the battery or disconnect the power and use suitable cut resistant gloves.
- Do not use excessive force i.e. force drilling a hard material.
- Always use the correct accessory for the task in hand. The accessories you use should be fully compatible with the tool you are using.



Personal Safety:

Human error can be a major cause of accidents, causing up to an estimated 80% of accidents at work. You must be in a fit state, alert and capable with a safe and stable posture to use power tools. Always keep your work area clear of debris to prevent slips, trips and falls.

PPE:

PPE is your last line of defence against harm. Hazards include projectiles, contact, noise, vibration and entanglement. Do not wear loose clothing and if you have long hair, keep it tied up as these may get entangled in the tool.

- Protect your EYES from flying objects from materials.
- Protect your EARS from the noise of the power tool.
- Protect your LUNGS from the dust omitted from materials.

Always wear your task related PPE, as outlined within the Spacepro RAMS. If you have any questions then please contact your RIM.

