



Hand Tool  
Safety

## eSafetyLine

### **Bladed Tools**

Many jobsite accidents have been caused by bladed tools being used incorrectly or in an unsafe way. Bladed tools include but are not limited to knives, axes and wedges. Some unsafe work habits include carrying knives in pockets or placed in toolboxes or on workbenches, axes used in place of sledgehammers, axes with loose handles and wedges hit ineffectively becoming dangerous projectiles.

Knives are a very common tool on nearly every jobsite and are used in some way by almost every trade. Many of us don't give the knife the respect it deserves, thinking that it's "only a knife", it can't cause that much damage. This is a dangerous underestimate. Knives more frequently cause disabling injuries than any other hand tool. The main hazard in the use of knives is the hand can easily slip from the handle onto the blade. To help prevent some common knife-related injuries, always position yourself so that the cutting stroke of the knife is angled AWAY from the body. In situations when this is not possible it is important to keep the hands and body clear of the blade. Knives should be kept and carried in sheaths or holders. A knife, even one that is sheathed, should never be carried on the front of a belt. When placed over either hip, if the knife were to fall it would be less likely to hit a leg and sever a large artery or vein. It sounds like common sense- but never try to catch a knife when it falls. It is almost a reflex action but it can lead to very serious cuts of the hand.

It is important to be trained in the safe and proper use of an axe. This includes proper lifting, swinging and accurate placement of the stroke. Hand placement for someone right-handed is to have the left hand placed about 3 inches from the handle's end and the right hand placed about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way up the handle. For someone left-handed this placement is reversed. Before swinging an axe it is important to be sure the axe has a clear circle to move through. Any brush, vines or shrubbery should be removed. Anyone using an axe should also wear safety shoes and protective eyewear.

Whenever possible the use of a wedge should be avoided and the wedge should be replaced with a maul. A maul is usually more effective and less dangerous. When a wedge is struck with a hammer the head of the hammer can be released and become a very dangerous projectile. If a wedge must be used, safety shoes and protective eyewear should be worn.

A good rule of thumb to avoid injuries when working with bladed tools is to keep the blades as sharp as possible. A dull blade is more likely to do damage than a sharp one.

### **Discussion Questions**

Why is a tool with a dull blade more dangerous than one with a sharp blade?

What is the correct hand placement on the handle of an axe?

# MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICS ADDRESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature

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Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Safety Coordinator's Signature

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Date