



Hand Tool  
Safety

## eSafetyLine

### Accident Analysis

On the afternoon of 12 January 2006, a worker was seriously injured on a jobsite in Sacramento, California. The worker was using a utility knife to scrape material off of the siding of a building. As he scraped, the knife slipped and cut across the inside of his wrist. The cut immediately began bleeding heavily. He called to a coworker for help at which time the coworker immediately called Emergency Medical Services from his cell phone.

The victim was told by his supervisor to lie down and elevate the wrist. A shirt was wrapped around the wrist and pressure was applied to try to slow the loss of blood. The EMT's arrive approximately 6 minutes later. The victim was transported by ambulance to the local hospital and admitted. The victim underwent surgery to reattach severed tendons and repair damaged blood vessels. The victim lost partial use of his hand and was unable to return to work.

Two recommendations that may have helped the worker avoid these injuries include:

- Using a more appropriate tool to scrape the material off of the siding. Something like a putty knife may have been a safer choice. It would have scraped off the siding but would have been less likely to cause such a severe cut.
- Angling the blade away from the hands and body. If the utility knife was the best or only choice for the task, the blade should have been angled away from the hands and body. The blade in this position would have been less likely to cause this serious of an injury.

Other safety tips to remember when using a knife on the jobsite include:

- Never carry knives in the pockets of clothes

- Always place knives upright in toolboxes or on workbenches
- Never attempt to catch a falling knife
- Always carry knives in sheaths or holders
- Always position a sheath or holder over the right or left hip, pointing toward the back of the body
- Always keep the blade as sharp as possible

Following these safety recommendations can help to keep employees safe while completing routine tasks on the jobsite. Had they been followed this employee may have been injured but it probably wouldn't have been career ending injury.

### **Discussion Questions**

Why would positioning the utility knife at a different angle helped to prevent this injury?

Why should a knife be carried over the hip of the individual carrying on a belt?

# 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

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date