

Using Tools Correctly

Just as a careless mindset & unsafe working conditions can present hazards, the improper use of tools & equipment can also cause injuries. You can prevent most accidents by using the right tools properly.

Using tools correctly involves:

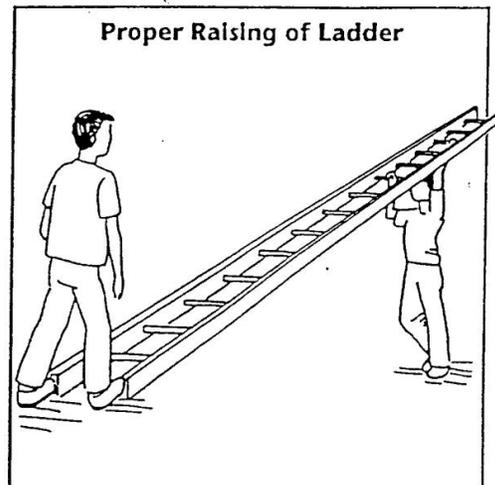
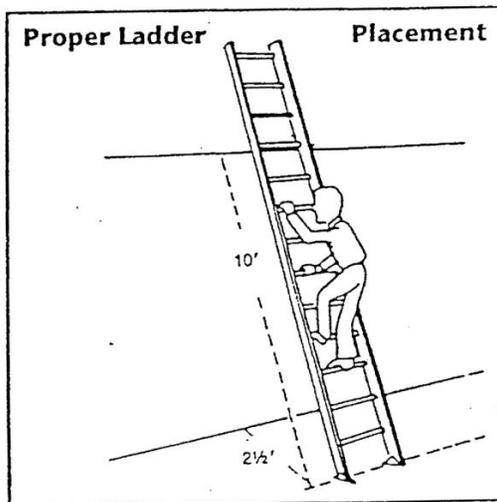
- Selecting the best tool for the job; and
- Using each tool properly.

Follow these guidelines when using WorkCamp tools:

Ladders

Careless use of a ladder can cause serious injury. At WorkCamp we do not allow people to be on ladders over 1 story tall. Use these important ladder safety tips:

- Always watch for overhead electrical wires
- Always use ladders when climbing. Don't use boxes, chairs, or other make-shift substitutes.
- Don't use a broken ladder. Call the project office to get a new one.
- Set ladders on a firm base at the proper angle. Place the bottom of the ladder away from the house about one fourth of the length of the ladder being used. For example, for a 10 foot ladder leaning against a wall, place the bottom of the ladder about 2.5 feet back from the house.
- To raise a ladder, have a co-worker brace the bottom. Lift the top above your head and walk the ladder into position. Don't place a ladder near a door or a blind corner. If you must set up a ladder near a door, lock the door.



- Hook one leg over a ladder rung if you are using both hands to work with.
- Do not overreach. Always keep your hips between the ladder rails.
- Open stepladders and A-type ladders completely. Lock them in the open position.
- Keep tools in a tool belt or bucket strapped to the ladder. Do not leave tools on a stepladder; they might fall and cause injuries.
- Face a ladder when climbing up or down.
- Do not use a stepladder as a straight ladder.

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Hand Tools

Using hand tools incorrectly causes injuries. Apply these safety rules when using hand tools.

- Use the proper tool. For example, use a screwdriver, not a hammer, to put in screws. Use a pry bar, not a screwdriver, to remove boards. Each tool is designed to do a particular job.
- Keep tools clean. Wipe off grease, dirt, caulk, or paint from all tools.
- Keep cutting edges sharp. Sharp tools are safer than dull tools. They also make work easier, improve accuracy, and save time.
- When carrying tools, cover sharp edges.

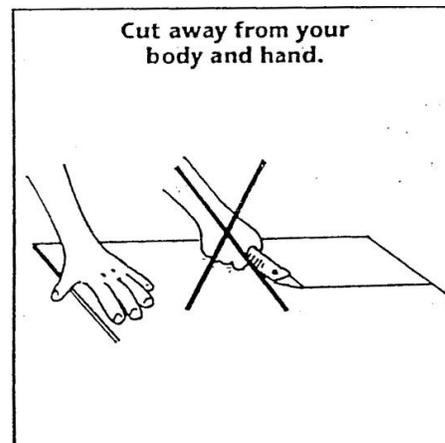
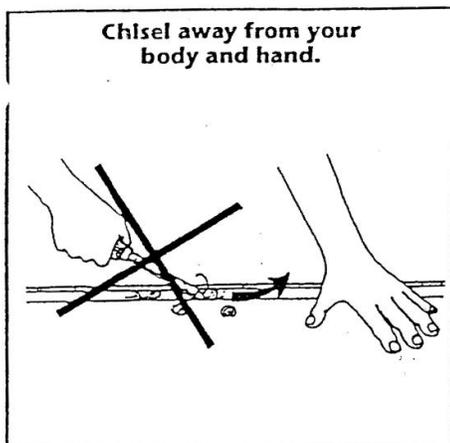
Hammers

- Begin hammering a nail with one or two soft strokes. Then move your hand away from the nail and use harder strokes to finish the nail. Don't try to drive a nail with only one or two strokes.
- Grip the hammer handle to give you maximum control and the ability to effectively hit the nail. Do not position your hand too close to the hammerhead.
- Make sure the hammerhead fits snugly on the handle. If it is loose, do not use the hammer until it is repaired.

Chisels

Use a wood chisel to remove small sections of wood to prepare hinge mortises, door striker plates, and lock inserts.

- Always chisel away from your body. Never hold your hand in front of the chisel.
- Do not force a chisel with your hand. Tap the chisel lightly with a hammer or mallet.
- Do not use a chisel as a nail cutter, pry bar, or screwdriver. This will dull the chisel.



Utility Knives

Use a utility knife to cut through porous materials like roll roofing, siding, insulation, and sheetrock.

- Keep the cutting edges sharp. Sharp knives are safer than dull knives.
- Cut away from your hand and body.
- Think before you cut.
- Don't use a knife as a screwdriver or pry bar.

Pry Bars

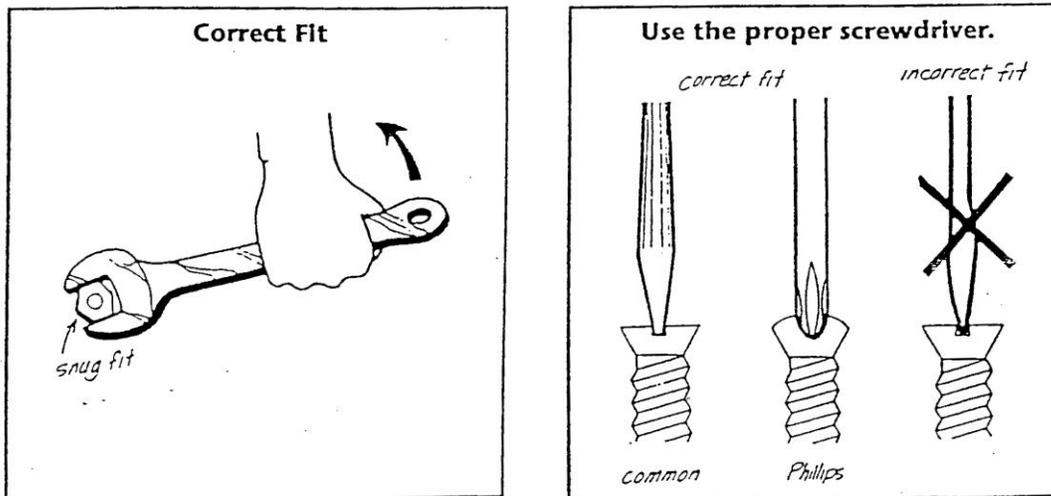
Create leverage to loosen or remove nails, siding and boards with a pry bar.

- Plant your feet firmly to keep your balance. Don't pry with all your weight on the bar.
- Use steady pressure. Don't jerk on the bar.

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Wrenches

Make sure the wrench head fits snugly on the nut, bolt, or pipe. Loose fitting wrenches can slip off and cause injury. Pull the wrench toward you; don't push it away from you.



Screwdrivers

Select the correct size and type of screwdriver for the job. Blades that are too small can damage the screw. Blades that are too large can mar the working surface. Use a standard screwdriver for single-slot screws and a Phillips screwdriver for Phillips-head screws.

- Keep your hands away from the blade to avoid getting cut if the screwdriver slips.
- Don't use a screwdriver as a punch or pry bar.
- Make starter holes for screws with a drill, a small awl or a nail.

Power Tools

Power tools are safe and efficient if used properly, but carelessness can cause serious injury. Accidents with power tools happen very quickly. You can lose a finger before you feel the pain. You cannot be too careful when using power tools. **Youth may only use these under the supervision of an adult.**

When using power tools:

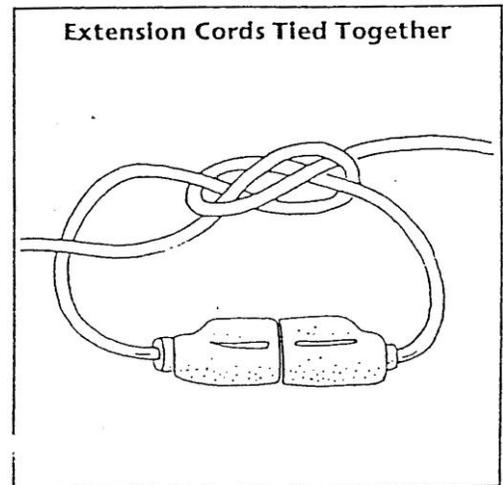
- Wear safety goggles to protect your eyes.
- Tie the ends of the cord together before plugging them in to each other. This will prevent the cords from coming apart.
- Use tools that are grounded.
- Use three-prong extension cords. If you must use an adapter, ground it to the electrical outlet if possible. Never remove the ground prong from the cord.
- Report a minor shock caused by a power tool – replace it! A shock indicates a short in the tool.
- Do not use defective power tools. Even minor defects can cause injuries.
- Do not use tools with damaged electrical cords.
- Never operate a power tool unless you know how to use it properly.
- Be sure the power switch is off before plugging a tool into an outlet.
- Never talk to anyone who is using a power tool. It may distract the person and cause injury.
- Always unplug a power tool before working on it. For example, unplug a circular saw before putting on a new blade; unplug a drill before inserting a bit.

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Circular Saws & Mitre Saws

Unless they have a special blade, circular saws are used only to cut wood.

- Make sure the wood you are cutting is stable and properly supported. Ask someone to hold the wood for you if necessary.
- Look under the cutting surface and remove anything in the blade's path.
- Make sure you cut just outside the measuring mark.
- Start the saw before the blade enters the wood.
- Do not force the saw. Push the saw forward with steady, even pressure.
- If it's difficult to cut through a piece of wood, check the blade. If the blade is dull, get a sharp one or you can "burn up" the motor.
- When you get close to the edge of the board, use caution so the blade doesn't catch and kick back at you.
- Make sure the saw comes to a complete stop and the blade guard is back before putting the saw down.
- **Particular precaution must be taken when using these tools. Youth may only use these saws at WorkCamp or during their parish training under the constant supervision of an adult.**



Electric Drills

Electric drills are used to make holes of various sizes, mainly in wood, in order to secure fasteners like screws or bolts.

- Unplug the drill before you loosen or tighten the bit.
- Make sure nothing is behind or underneath the material you're drilling through.
- On hard surfaces, use a center punch or nail to mark where the hole will be drilled.

Handsaws

Use handsaws to cut sheetrock, wood or metal.

Hacksaw: cuts metal such as sheet metal and nails in wood.

Crosscut saw: designed only to cut wood

Keyhole saw: cuts holes in walls or sheetrock. (Ordinarily, a small hole should be started using a drill bit or jigsaw. Keyhole saws are also helpful when working in tight spaces where a crosscut saw is impractical.)

- First measure and mark each board. Make your first cut just outside the mark.
- Use your thumb as a guide to start the cut. Pull the saw toward you with two or three easy pulls.
- After starting the cut, move your hand several inches away from the blade. Saw with smooth strokes keeping the blade at a 45-degree angle to the cutting surface.
- Steadily push the saw, but don't "bear down." Let the saw do the work.
- Wear safety goggles when sawing overhead. Wear safety glasses at all times when on a WorkCamp project site.

