

# Work Equipment – Hand Tools

## Introduction

The Council will, in accordance with its general duties, make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of our employees to which they may be exposed whilst working with hand tools.

These risks will then be controlled so far as is reasonably practicable so that neither employees or others who could be exposed to them will be put at risk.

## Arrangements for securing the health and safety of employees

Managers will, in consultation with workers and their representatives:

1. Ensure that the correct tool for the job is provided
2. Ensure that employees do not misuse tools, which can lead to damage of materials, equipment, and the tools themselves as well as possibly leading to injury
3. Implement a system for reporting defective tools at all workplaces
4. Inform users of their responsibility to maintain tools and report any defects to their immediate supervisor
5. Ensure that defective tools are taken out of use and returned to the stores
6. Implement a system for the replacement of defective tools which will be made known to all employees
7. Arrange for tools to be repaired by trained personnel only
8. Arrange for regular inspection of electrically powered tools in accordance with EAWR; all tools will be tagged showing the date of the last test
9. Provide personal protective equipment if necessary
10. Ensure that work areas are kept clear of debris and any items that may impede the safe and efficient use of tools
11. Provide suitable storage facilities for tools.

## Training, information and instruction

All employees using tools will be trained in their use and the use and given appropriate information and instruction to enable the safe use of the tool or of any associated equipment used in conjunction with the prime tool. Any

employee who is not conversant with a tool must make it known to his or her supervisor.

### **Safe system of work**

To ensure the safe use of hand tools the following procedures should be followed:

1. All portable appliances should be used in accordance with the safe system of work.
2. Where electrical powered tools are used from a trailing lead:
  - a) the length of the lead should be kept to a minimum.
  - b) the cable should be heavy duty and capable of serving the equipment that it is to supply.
  - c) it should be paid out fully from any winding drum and if possible be protected from damage.
  - d) it should be laid with care to ensure that it does not present a trip hazard to others or to the user of the equipment.
3. When using power tools that are designed to be fitted with guards, the guards will be fitted correctly prior to the use of the tool.
4. Power tools must be isolated from the power source before any routine adjustments are carried out (e.g. when replacing bits or blades)
5. The correct fuse rating must be used for all electric tools
6. When using compressed air tools:
  - a) couplings should be securely attached before allowing air to flow.
  - b) air compressors should be located outside the building in which the work is being conducted.
  - c) all hoses and couplings should be checked regularly by the user and supervisors
  - d) hoses should be routed so that they do not obstruct access, allow free movement of the tool and are not likely to become damaged whilst in use.
7. Supervisors should ensure that equipment and tools are properly maintained and repaired, that correct working methods are followed and that no unsafe practices are tolerated.
8. Employees should use tools in the correct manner and choosing the correct one for the job, using the safety devices and equipment provided, and report conditions they believe to be dangerous.

Hand tools of various types are used in many workplaces. The three most important points regarding their safe use are:

- a) to use the correct tool for the job.
- b) to report any defects found and to stop using the defective tool immediately.
- c) to maintain the tool in a safe condition, which will involve regular inspection in the case of electrically powered tools.

### **Record keeping**

Records should be kept of the following:

1. Issue and receipt of all tools.
2. All tools returned as defective. As well as making a record of the defects the tools must themselves be clearly marked as being defective.
3. Details of inspection and testing of electrically powered hand tools (in compliance with Electricity at Work Regulations).
4. Information provided to persons using certain hand tools.
5. Details of induction and skills training given to personnel, as well as management and supervisory training courses.

### **Summary of statutory duties**

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA): Requires employers to provide and maintain plant in a safe condition and without risk, so far as is reasonably practicable. This requirement of s2 will also apply to hand tools and s3 in how the use of such work equipment may affect others nearby e.g. members of the public, service users.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations: Regulation 3 requires that employers carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk to the health and safety of their employees. Regulation 4 then requires that the employer gives effect to such arrangements as are appropriate for the planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventive and protective measures.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER): Lays down the safety requirements for the use of hand tools, whether hand held, and power driven or just hand operated. Regulation 4 requires that tools are suitable for their intended purpose and regulation 5 requires that they are maintained in an efficient state. Regulations 8 and 9 outline the information, instructions and training to be provided to the user of hand tools. Specific requirements are contained within the regulations which place duties on the employer to:

- a) prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery
- b) protect against specified hazards
- c) protect against extremes of temperature
- d) fit controls to the equipment
- e) provide means of isolation from energy source
- f) ensure stability of equipment
- g) provide adequate lighting
- h) enable safe maintenance work
- i) affix health and safety markings and warnings.

The provisions of the Electricity at Work Regulations (EAWR) will apply if the hand tool is electrically powered.

See also: **Work Equipment - Powered Tools** and;  
**Provision and Use of Work Equipment arrangement.**

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