












Introducing Hand Tools – General Rules

Safety Question: When introducing students to the safe use of hand tools what strategies should be implemented?

Generally people consider hand tools to be inherently safer than power tools and therefore assume that using hand tools involves a lesser degree of risk. While it's true that any accident involving power tools is usually more severe than using hand tools, all tools have the same potential for difficulties if not used correctly.

Before allowing students to use any tools they must first be introduced to the General Rules for using tools safely. A checklist of such rules, should be completed prior to handling any tool and will always serve as a good reminder for all students. This should be easy to read, placed in a highly visible area immediately near the hands tool storage area. Students could complete this in written, verbal, self checking or monitored form depending on their level of maturity.

General Rules for Using Tools Safely

- All personal protective equipment such as eye protection is used. 
- Long hair is tied "out of the way" using an elastic band. 
- Long sleeves are rolled up and loose clothing tucked in to keep it out of the way. 
- Jewelry and watches are removed.   
- The material being worked on is secured or clamped in place (e.g., secured in a miter box which is clamped to the work surface or clamped to the work surface itself). 
- The tool being used is in good repair and cutting tools must be sharp. A dull tool is more dangerous than a sharp one because it requires more force to use and is therefore less easy to control. 
- The correct tool is selected for the task to be completed. Screwdrivers and chisels are not interchangeable tools! 
- The hand not on the tool is always kept well away from the tool and to the side of the tool. This "free hand" should be used to help hold the material. 
- He or She is mentally prepared and focused on the task at hand. Students need to be free from the use of alcohol or drugs (prescription or non prescription). 



Once students are well aware of these rules then the specific rules for individual tools will need to be introduced. This must be done through teacher demonstration.