Shop, Tool & Electrical Safety

**DOs**

- Recognize that tools you use at home - scissors, knives, garden equipment and other common implements - can be just as dangerous as workshop tools if mishandled.
- Always wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as appropriate, i.e., safety glasses, gloves, hearing protection and appropriate footwear.
- Read and follow manufacturer’s instructions. At work, always follow your department’s safe work practices and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Only use clean, well-maintained power tools. Check power cords to be sure they are not frayed, damaged or missing the 3rd prong ground.
- Keep MIND AND EYES ON THE TASK. Pay attention to your work and be prepared for the unexpected. Take a break if you start to lose focus on the job at hand.
- Follow Energy Isolation-Lock out/Tag out procedures. All types of energy must be isolated or “locked off” before you clean or service tools and equipment.

**DON’Ts**

- DON’T carry power tools by their cords, or move them from one place to another while they are in the “on” position.
- DON’T allow your workplace to become messy, wet or poorly ventilated. Clutter can lead to trips and falls, and wet or poorly ventilated areas can result in exposure to fumes, fire or electrocution.
- DON’T use power tools if they (or their power cords) are damaged or if any parts or pieces are missing. Don’t replace blades, bits, extensions or cutters without unplugging the power tool first.
- DON’T give in to complacency and overconfidence, or allow yourself to be distracted. These dangerous mindsets can affect even experienced workers.
- DON’T forget that office tools such as paper cutters, staplers, scissors, shredders and X-acto knives can cause serious injury if not handled properly. Use box cutters with self-retracting blades, and always retract blades into other tools before storing them.
- DON’T think you are the only one who would pay the price if you were injured. Your family, co-workers and community all suffer when you are unable to contribute as you usually do.

No matter who you are or what you do, tools are part of your life at work and at home. Following safe work procedures when using tools - along with electricity and other power sources - is a responsibility we all share. What’s at stake? Our own safety as well as the negative impacts that would affect family, friends, co-workers and the University’s mission of education, research and service.

For more information on how to stay healthy, safe and secure, contact your campus Environment, Health and Safety Office.

A UC System-Wide Publication of the Environment, Health & Safety Leadership Council

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