

TOOL BOX TALK

HAND-HELD POWER TOOLS

Injuries involving handheld portable power tools are common in the workplace, frequently resulting in serious injuries to hands and fingers. Common causes have been found to include:

- Equipment is not inspected prior to use or electrical testing and tagging is out of date
- Safety equipment has been removed. For example, grab handles and guarding on portable grinders or drills
- Incorrect cutting blades being used, for example timber blades when cutting metals and plastics
- Not wearing appropriate PPE or gloves when using power tool

Using your tools

Your induction training provides information on handheld tools and what is expected if you are required to use handheld electrically powered tools.

If you have been advised by your Hays Consultant to provide your own power tools you must only use equipment that is safe, fit for purpose, has a current electrical tag and has been fitted with the requisite safety equipment.

If equipment is not tagged or safety equipment is removed or disengaged, or it is being inappropriately used you could be issued with a breach notice by a visiting H&S Inspector to action any shortfall within a prescribed timeframe.

Using a client's tools

Guards - Guards need to be fitted to prevent exposure to moving blades. Inappropriate use of tools may result in disciplinary action being taken against you either by the client or Hays

Handles - Grab handles need to be fitted to handheld grinders and other high-risk power tools. The absence of grab handles creates instability, loss of control when cutting or general use and increased risk of injury.

Blades - Cutting blades need to be suitable for the material being cut. Ensure the speed rating for the blade is higher than the rating of the tool being used.

Testing and tagging - Safe Work Australia guidelines provide handheld power tools must be tested and tagged at least every 3 months. This may be less with some clients. If you do not know the testing obligations on site, find out and ensure that you comply.

Fit for purpose - Are you using the correct tool for the job and is there any margin for error when cutting?

What to expect from Hays?

As part of our workplace site inspections where relevant Hays also undertakes, inspections of handheld power tools provided used by our temporary contractors. If equipment is not tested, fitted with safety guards and grab handles, has the incorrect type of blade or is being inappropriately used you will be issued with a warning and corrective actions to remedy the issue will need to be taken before you can continue work.

How to report

Do not think because you may be new on site that you should not report a hazard.

To report any health & safety concern or hazard please contact the Hays Health and Safety team by calling 1800 786 057 (Australia) or 0800 562 669 (option 4) (New Zealand). Alternatively, if you prefer you can also report this by speaking to your Hays consultant. Hays will always work to ensure that your safety comes first and so will take the necessary steps required to safeguard this. All calls are confidential, your identity will not be divulged without your specific prior consent.

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