Hand & Portable Power Tools Safety Awareness

Often we overlook the hazards associated with the common tools that are used on a daily basis. With this fact sheet we hope to bring some awareness to the potential hazards of these tools and how to minimize these hazards.

Training:

- Each employee using hand and portable power tools must receive initial training and an annual refresher.

Pre-Inspection Use (Done before every use):

- Damaged or cracked housing, power source, or bits/accessories
- Dull blades are often more dangerous than sharp blades
- Missing guards or protective devices
- Leaking gasoline, oil or other fluids
- Tool appears to be in poor condition
- Does the tool have a 3-wire cord, if not is it double insulated?
- Ensure area is free of any potential trip hazards
- Do not underestimate the importance of a clean work area

Proper Use:

- Ensure you are wearing the correct PPE
- You should always wear eye protection
- Use the proper tool for the job
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions
- If unsure about use, ask a supervisor or coworker for clarification
- Ensure tools are not pointed at or operated in close proximity to other individuals
- Use spark resistant tools when working near a fuel source
- Do not use excessive force to cut/drill through hard materials
- Gasoline/Mixed Fuel Powered Tools must be off and cool when re-fueled, use only in well ventilated areas
- If you need to use a gas/mixed fuel powered tool indoors, please contact EH&S prior to use
- Never carry a tool by the cord or yank to disconnect from the power source
- Beware of hidden hazards affected by your work (i.e. gas/electrical lines)

Storage:

- Drain fluids (gasoline) if equipment will be in storage for an extended period of time
- De-energize tools prior to storage (includes removing air pressure, hydraulic pressure and removing loads)

- Store electric tools in dry areas
- Store flammables in accordance with applicable regulations (527CMR6)

Group Discussions:

- Has anyone in your group been injured by a power tool or had a close call? How could this injury have been prevented?
- What tools present the greatest hazard in your work environment? How can you minimize these risks?
- Are there any tools in your area that need to be repaired or discarded? If so take time to do this immediately.