



Tool Maintenance

How many tools do you use on any given day? You use hand tools, power tools, and pneumatic tools. All of these tools make the tasks we do at work much easier. But tools have to be in good shape and used safely to really be effective. Broken or damaged tools are safety hazards and should never be used. As someone who uses tools every day, you should consider the following issues every time you pick up a tool.

Inspection: Don't take a new tool out of the box and assume that it is good to go. Occasionally, tools slip past the manufacturer's quality assurance program and they are shipped out damaged or missing important parts. Always inspect tools, new or not, before you start using them.

Handling: There are good and bad ways to hold and carry tools. Hold them by the handles, not the cords. Don't carry a tool with your finger on the trigger. Keep blades protected.

Attachments: If the tool has attachments, make sure they fit properly and are securely in place. You will almost always have to lock out the tool in order to add or remove attachments safely.

Adjustment: Learn how to safely make adjustments to the tool you're using. It's much safer to complete a training class than to just wing it. Some adjustments can be made "on-the-fly", for others you will have to follow lockout procedures.

Storage: Place tools in a safe place, like their cases, a rack or a gang box for storage. Make sure your storage area is clean and dry. Lock tools up to prevent unauthorized use or theft.

Lubrication: Many tools require daily or weekly lubrication to keep them running smoothly. Whether you do your own maintenance or it gets done at a central location, make sure all tools are lubricated properly and on schedule.

Cleaning: Follow the manufacturer's instructions and make sure that you have the right cleaning materials available. Never use compressed oxygen or gasoline to clean tools.

Sharpening: Remember that tool maintenance includes keeping blades, bits, and cutters sharp. A dull blade is more likely to cause an injury than a sharp one.



Personal Protective Equipment: Always wear the required PPE when operating a tool or performing maintenance. You'll almost always need it, so just make eye protection a habit.

Removing a Tool from Service: Tag a tool "DO NOT USE" if you find it not working properly, is broken, damaged, or has a broken safety device. Don't wait. Take the tool out of service immediately and inform your supervisor.

Safety Devices and Switches: Never remove, disable, or bypass any safety device. They are there for your protection.

Operator's Manual: Read and heed all instructions.

SAFETY REMINDER

What do you do with waste oil when you do preventive maintenance? Don't just dump it on the ground. Take it to your local hazardous waste facility.