

# HAND SAFETY

TALK SAFETY TO ME
TOOLBOX TALKS

## *Keep your hands out of the line of fire.*

## Talking Points

Your hands are your most valuable tools on the job. Unfortunately, hand injuries are among the most common workplace injuries and are often life-changing. Most hand injuries occur when workers place their hands in the "line of fire" between moving equipment, materials, tools, or objects. The good news is that most of these injuries are preventable through awareness, planning, and safe work practices.

What is the line of fire? The line of fire is any area where your hands could be caught, pinched, crushed, struck, or cut by moving objects, equipment, tools, or materials. Before starting any task, identify the hazards and think about what could hurt you and how to avoid it.

### Common Hazards

***Pinch points – How to reduce the risk***

- Keep fingers away from contact points.
- Use tools instead of fingers to align materials.
- Keep hands on designated handles whenever possible.
- Communicate clearly with coworkers before moving materials.
- Never place your fingers where you wouldn't place your entire hand.

***Crushing Injury – How to prevent***

- Stay clear while loads are being lowered.
- Never put your hands under a load.
- Use tag lines to control moving loads.
- Chock round materials to prevent rolling.
- Keep hands on top, not underneath, when carrying objects. Objects don't have to fall very far to crush fingers.

### Using Tools – Best Practices

- Inspect tools before use.
- Use the right tool for the job.
- Keep cutting edges sharp and maintained.
- Secure materials before cutting, drilling, or grinding. Never hold material in one hand while cutting with the other.
- Maintain good footing and body positioning.
- Wear appropriate gloves for the task.
- Ask yourself, "If this tool slips, where will it go?" The answer should never be towards your hand or body.

**Activity**

Supervisors bring a common workplace item (i.e. toolbox, ladder, tool, bucket, etc.) Ask employees to demonstrate how they would – pick it up, carry it, and set it down. As they demonstrate, ask the group these questions.

- Where are the pinch points?
- What could move unexpectedly?
- If the item slipped, where would the employee's hands go?
- Could the task be performed with a better hand position?
- Is there a tool or mechanical aid that could eliminate the hazard?

**Final Thought**

Most hand injuries happen in seconds, but their effects can last a lifetime. Before every task, take a moment to identify pinch points, keep your hands out of the line of fire, and ask yourself:

"***If something moves unexpectedly, where will my hands be?***"