

# TOOL BOX TALKS

## Utility Knife Safety

EVERY workplace in America has a utility or box knife. Improper utility knife use can result in minor lacerations or severe lacerations requiring intense surgical repair. Fingers, hands, thumbs and even legs can be injured by utility knives. Whenever a utility knife is needed, ask these two questions: Is a utility knife the right tool for this job? Is there another cutting tool that will be more appropriate and safe?

### WORKSAFE TIPS

#### TIPS FOR SAFE BOX KNIFE USE

Cut materials appropriate for box knives:

- Thin cardboard and paper
- Shrink wrap or thin plastics

Box knives may not be an appropriate tool for cutting some materials:

- Thick cardboard (Gaylord containers)
- Thick plastics, rubbers, plastic straps

Remember – as MORE FORCE is needed to cut, the greater the injury if one occurs!

MORE FORCE can lead to a severe laceration.

MORE FORCE user to lose control.

Forcing the knife can lead to hand and arm fatigue, a weaker grip, which can lead to an injury.

#### DULL BLADES INCREASE CUTTING FORCE

Dull blades require more cutting force exerted by the hand, meaning accidents produce very traumatic injuries such as ligament and tendon damage with severe bleeding.

#### DULL BLADE DISPOSAL

Box knife blades get dull after only a few uses.

DO NOT use a box knife with a dull blade.

Keep spare blades handy and accessible to others.

DON'T dispose of dull blades in trash cans.

Consider purchasing safety knives with protected or retractable blades.

Consider disposable knives that do not require blade change-out.

Dispose of dull blades in a leak-proof container.

(Old coffee can w/ lid, plastic box with lid.)

#### BOX KNIFE TIPS CONTINUED

When emptying trash cans, employees may be injured if blades are not disposed of properly.

Do not use "too much blade."

Only use enough blade to make the cut.

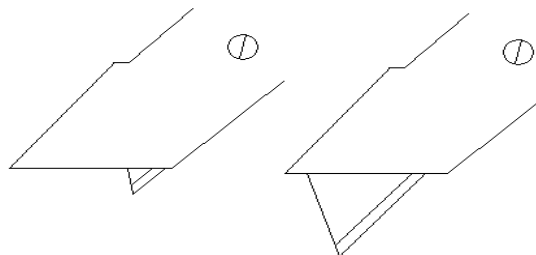
More blade results in increased cutting area, resulting in a more traumatic injury when an accident occurs.

Cut AWAY from the body.

Line of fire: Keep hands, fingers, arms out of the cutting path!

Close knives after use.

Do not store knives in the "open" position.



#### PURCHASING UTILITY KNIVES

Consider other cutting tools versus utility knives.

Only purchase box knives with adjustable blades.

DON'T buy knives without adjustable blades.

Only buy knives with closing mechanisms.

Consider employee requests when purchasing safety knives.

Before purchase, consider common jobs that require utility knife use & match the safety knife to the job.

**WorkSAFE**

Smart, Accident-Free Environments

# Tool Box Talk

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Instructor \_\_\_\_\_

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Follow-up Items

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*These advisory materials have been developed from national standards and sources believed to be reliable, however, no guarantee is made as to the sufficiency of the information contained in the material and Missouri Employers Mutual Insurance Company assumes no liability for its use. Advice about specific situations should be obtained from a safety professional.*



**Smart, Accident-Free Environments**

888.499.SAFE (7233)