Preventing injuries when employees work with hand tools

Relying on our risk management expertise and our extensive information database, Utica National analyzed workers compensation losses reported by our auto service and repair shop customers during a three-year period. During this period, hand tool-related injuries were a frequent cause of employee injuries.

Here are some tips that could help lessen instances of these types of on-the-job injuries:

- **Emphasize the threat of injury employees face while working with hand tools.**
- **Talk with your staff about the causes of personal injuries.** Some of the causes include:
  - Employees striking their hands while using hammers.
  - Using the wrong tool for the job, such as removing a seal with a crow bar, or overexerting forces with pliers and ratchet-wrenches.
  - Using tools with cracked or splintered handles.
  - Using tools with loose or mushroomed heads.
- **Observe your employees while they perform their daily tasks** to evaluate work practices such as using the right tool for the job, verifying that hand tools are in good condition and are used in a safe manner. Change or eliminate tasks that could cause injuries.
- **Establish work rules**, such as a hand tool inspection program whereby employees are required to take unsafe tools out-of-service until fixed or replaced.
- **Identify hazardous workplace practices** that could contribute to employee injuries and make changes before the accident happens. Consider such things as:
  - Maintaining all tools and equipment (both company and employee owned) in good condition.
  - Make employees aware of the hazards caused by faulty or improperly used hand tools.
  - Checking periodically to assure all tools are in good operating condition.
  - Providing appropriate safety glasses, face shields, etc. to be used while using hand tools or equipment that might cause flying particles or be subject to breakage.

- **Develop a checklist of those conditions that need ongoing attention** and use the list to make regular workplace checks to assure hazards are abated.

- **Provide proper equipment to help employees do the job safely.** This measure will help improve safety, quality and efficiency!

- **If an injury occurs, take the time to find out the cause(s) and make the necessary changes to prevent a recurrence.** Consider workplace conditions and practices as well as employee experience, training and proper supervision.

- **Ask employees for input for making their job safer.**

Utica National has a wide array of materials available to help you control these types of losses. Visit us at [www.uticanational.com](http://www.uticanational.com) or contact your local Risk Management Representative for more information.