

Working Safely with Sharp Blades or Edges

Why is there a concern when working near sharp blades or edges?

The most common concern when using sharp blades or edges is an injury, such as a cut (laceration, puncture) or an amputation.

Tools or equipment with sharp blades or edges can include:

- box cutters, utility knives, safety cutters, etc.
- scissors
- equipment with blades or moving parts



How can this hazard be eliminated or the risk controlled?

Most reliable option is to eliminate the use of the blade. Assess if there is another way to reduce the need for using the blade. Is there a different type of blade or tool that will do the job safer (e.g., covered blades, fixed guards, non-exposed blades, spring backs, tape splitters, pliers, snips, etc.)?

If you have an idea to reduce the need for using the blade please fill out the Continuous Improvement Form (forms located at the safety boards) and hand it in to your supervisor.

If these options are not possible, the following steps may help to reduce the risk of injury.

What do I need to know about the safe use of hand tools with sharp blades?

To prevent cuts:

- Cut away from your body. Make sure no body parts are in the cutting path, or in the path the blade might take if it slips.
- Only use the tool for the job it was designed for. For example, a knife should not be used as a pry bar, chisel, scraper, or screwdriver.
- Inspect the tool before use. Make sure the blade is sharp. Dull blades require more force, increasing the chance of injury.
- Cut on a stable surface. Use a cutting board and/or slip-resistant matting to prevent the item from sliding on the counter.
- Where possible, use a mechanical device to hold the item.
- Wear cut resistant gloves
- Do not use excessive pressure when cutting. Do not cut more than the knife can handle.
- Do not engage in discussions with your co-workers while you are using a sharp tool. Stop cutting if you need to look up or focus on something else.
- Keep your hands away from the edges of cutting blades. Keep your eyes on the item you are cutting and know where your fingers are in relation to the blade.