**"Power Tool Safety"**

**Why It Matters:**

☞ In FY 2004 there were more than 800 OSHA citations for violations of power tools standards (both general industry and construction), with penalties totaling well over a half a million dollars.
☞ There are more than 100,000 hospital emergency room visits each year in the United States due to power tool accidents.
☞ In California alone, power tool injuries cause more than 1,500 injuries each year that result in lost workdays.

**ANTI-KICKBACK SAFETY RULES**

**To Avoid possible injury or death from kickback:**

1. Stay clear of feed and discharge areas during machine operation.
2. Set holddown height correctly.
3. Keep anti-kickback fingers clean, free, straight and sharp.
4. Do NOT oil anti-kickback fingers.
5. Do NOT lift anti-kickback fingers unless arbor is completely stopped.
6. Do NOT operate machine when wearing gloves or loose clothing.
7. Lockout/tagout before servicing.

**There's a lot at stake with power tool safety.** If you've ever actually witnessed a power tool injury, you didn't forget it. Knowing how to work safely with power tools – saws, drills, sanders, grinders, etc., – is an extremely serious topic, because injuries from power tool accidents can e severe and permanent. According to Power Tool Institute, a trade group, there are three main reasons most such injuries happen:

- **Loss of concentration:** Operators can stop paying attention to their work if they repeat the same actions with a power tool over and over again.
- **Unexpected events:** A kickback or other sudden problem with a fast-moving power tool can be very dangerous, especially if the operator does not have the experience to expect the unexpected.
- **Inexperience and overconfidence:** It's a hazardous combination if the operator doesn't know the importance of being careful at all times when using a power tool.

**Hand injuries are not the only problem.** Cuts, abrasions, puncture wounds, and amputations are bad enough, but there are plenty of other ways that power tools can be harmful. Ask your training group to compile a list of possible hazards; in addition to the above, it should also include eye injuries (from flying particles), hearing damage (from excessive noise), inhaling hazardous dust, foot injuries (from dropping a heavy tool), musculoskeletel disorders (from vibration over extended periods), and electric shock.

**Compile a power tool safety checklist.** As a group exercise, construct a comprehensive checklist of safety rules for power tools. The list should also include:

☞ Don't use any tool that appears to be damaged or unsafe.
☞ Make sure all blades, nip points, and moving parts are properly guarded.
☞ Electrically powered tools should be used only with power cords in good condition, and properly grounded.
☞ Always wear appropriate PPE for the tool - eye and face protection, hearing protection, safety shoes, etc.
☞ If you're not sure how to use a power tool properly, don't guess - read the instructions or ask a supervisor.
☞ Never lift or carry an electric power tool by the cord.