

GRINDERS & ABRASIVE SAWS

Grinders and abrasive saws are common on a construction site or in an industrial shop. Many injuries occur due to improper use and maintenance of these useful tools. There are many important safety factors. Here are a few to consider:

- Read the manufacturer's instructions which will include all pertinent safety information. If you do not have a copy, your employer should be able to supply you with one.
- Visually inspect the tool prior to using. Is the abrasive wheel chipped or cracked?
- Make sure the grinding wheel or saw has a *higher* maximum rated speed than the maximum motor speed of the tool. The majority of injuries result from catastrophic failure while the wheel is spinning at high speeds. If it is a new wheel, give it a quick test run. Spin it for 1 minute at maximum speed prior to cutting anything. Do not stand in front of the wheel during this test.
- Make sure all guards and shields are in place and in good working order. Do not operate a grinder or saw that is missing guards or shields.
- Grinding operations typically spray sparks within the work area. Check for combustibles within the area before beginning any work. Make sure to direct sparks away from yourself and others.
- Consider the material you are cutting/grinding. Are there any exposure hazards with inhaling the fumes or dust of the material? Proper respiratory protection must be worn if there is a respiratory hazard.

- Is it possible to engage the 'on' switch when setting the grinder on a table or is there a safety in place?
- Always wear a face shield and safety glasses when using a grinder, as well as work gloves and hearing protection.
- Make sure long hair is tied up, dangling jewelry is removed and baggy clothing is avoided. Entanglement is a major cause of injuries with grinders and abrasive saws.
- Unplug the grinder before changing cutting heads.

