

TT0084 – Using Knives Safely

January 2025

Note: This toolbox works best for 10-15 workers if you can, try to get a few cut resistant gloves that can be passed around during the toolbox talk. i.e. NXG Greentex Cut D or Esko Razor X540.

Just about every job **requires** the use of **our hands**.

Knives are commonly used, and useful tools and they are also one of the most dangerous. Between 2018 & 2020, ACC recorded an average of 19,000 knife related claims each year. Cuts and lacerations to the hands are one of the top workplace injuries on our sites. Not only do they hurt, but they can side-line you for days, weeks and in some cases, even permanently.

There are many different knives used onsite. Craft, utility, utility with lockable blades, snap lock and many more.

Utility Knives and Craft Knives:

- Are small light duty knives best suited for cutting thin, lightweight materials.
- Utility knives present special hazards: Be certain the blade is fully extended and locked prior to use.
- Be sure the knife blade is fully retracted when you finish using it.
- Properly install the blade in the holder, so it will not fall out when you are using it.
- Never use a blade that is not in the utility knife housing.

Often craft knives are selected because they are faster or easier not because they are the correct tool for the task so before you choose a knife, take a PAUSE and THINK if another safer tool could be used.

When using knives, how can we protect ourselves?

- Wear cut resistant gloves to protect your hands, should your knife slip.
- Be careful when using a knife in a crowded area or in a walkway where someone could easily bump into you.
- Make sure that gloves and the knife handle are **dry**, not slippery.
- **Never** try to catch a falling knife.
- Do not leave an open knife in your pocket or tool bag.
- When cutting, make the cutting motion away from your body. If this is not possible, keep your body clear of the stroke.
- Keep the knife blade sharp to minimize the force necessary to cut material and reduce the risk of slipping and injuring yourself. Remember **a dull blade means more force has to be exerted** when cutting, which can increase the risk of injury.

TT0084 – Using Knives Safely

January 2025

- Never wipe a knife blade off on your clothes, gloves or apron. Use a cloth and make sure the sharp edge is turned away from you.
- Make sure a folding knife has a locking blade and that you lock the blade BEFORE using the knife.
- Replace dull blades when necessary and dispose of used blades in an appropriate bin.
- Use safer alternatives i.e. Knives with retractable or encapsulated blades.

Lastly, **70% of hand injuries** can be reduced by selecting the right tool and PPE. which in this case is **selecting and wearing gloves** for the task which can reduce the potential for harm.

<p>Utility/Craft Knives</p>	
<p>Utility knife with lockable blade</p>	
<p>Snap Lock Knives</p>	
<p>Retractable Knives</p>	
	
<p>Encapsulated Blades</p>	

