

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

Earlier today, I decided to remove the 5' tall plastic Frosty the Snowman lawn ornament to his proper storage niche in my shop. (Unfortunately, shop must double as storage area.) As I fumbled to get Frosty arranged in his special corner place, he knocked over a nearly full and uncapped can of ether based starting fluid that I had carelessly left out on a shelf.. Well the can hit the floor behind two large storage boxes and some other junk and started to hiss like a live handgrenade...(which it was) After a couple of attempts to retrieve only resulted in a face full of ether and a rapidly growing cloud of explosive vapor, I decided that an alternative plan of action was in order...Feeling it unwise to hit the master cut-off switch in my powered up shop....I covered the distance (about 45 yards) from the shop to the master breaker box in my house in about 3.421 seconds...And for a 6'1", 280 LB, 54 year old out of shape guy, that aient bad...amazing what a little fear will do to you...I was able to turn off the electricity at the main breaker before the vapors reached something with a spark...Fortunately the 'Good Lord' wasn't ready for another woodworker just yet... With the mild weather today, I hadn't lit my kerosene heater this morning as I usually do when it is cold...Or I would have most likely relocated my shop and maybe my butt across several Parishes in LA and over much of East Texas as well. We all learn from our mistakes and I'm fortunate enough to be able to make plans to prevent this from occurring again..

Advice

PLAN...

1. NEVER store aerosol cans without protective caps in place..
2. Store all shop flammables in their own enclosed and properly ventilated cabinet.
3. Install Explosion Proof Emergency Power disconnect near door..

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

This is an accident with my truck. I needed schedule 80 4" PVC conduit to run under my new driveway to carry water and sprinkler control lines to the other side. This is heavy-wall pipe, perhaps 1/2" wall thickness, and very heavy. I got three lengths of pipe loaded on top of the 4x4 roof rack at the supplier's place of business, on level ground. At home, I untied the ropes holding the pipe on the roof. One started to roll off the roof. Knowing that they were expensive, and a fairly long drive to replace them if it broke, I tried to cushion the fall to the ground by holding the end closest to me. The far end hit the ground first. In slow-motion I could see the pipe flex and rebound, right into my thumb at the second joint. That stuff is sharp! Off to the emergency room: fortunately no damage to the tendon, just a bunch of stitches, after VERY painful novocaine injections.

Advice

Let the work hit the ground. It isn't worth the agony to save it.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

Installing a 4 foot flourescent fixture, I held on to the edges without gloves. One end was attached to the ceiling with wire. The wire snapped and the fixture slid across my left hand, cutting off all 4 finger tips.

Advice

Wear heavy duty leather gloves and have someone help you.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

This accident involved a plain old screwdriver. I was working as an emergency room nurse when a fellow came in (he drove himself to hospital) with a screwdriver poking out of his eye. He had been trying to pry open a can of paint and it slipped. He was afraid to remove the tool himself, so held onto it and drove himself in. He lost the eye, but luckily nothing more. Am not making this up - it happened in Burlington Memorial hosp., Burlington, WI in 1974 or 1975.

Advice

The obvious - a screwdriver is not a can opener, and if you must, at least aim it away from yourself!

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

While operating a Weinig 5-head moulder, I shut the machine down and left the area. I returned in a short time, and proceeded to clean the wood chips from in front of the 1st cutterhead. I had checked the machine visually, to make sure the heads had stopped. I was not able to tell that the 1st cutterhead was still spinning, simply because it was still spinning at such high speed. I caught my hand in the cutterhead for a split-second, and lost my thumb and index finger. The damage was too extensive to repair. This machine is normally one of the safest to operate.

Advice

Make sure that if you are employed by someone else, they provide high-speed machines with factory installed braking systems to prevent cutters from moving after the switch is turned-off. Also, dust collection is key... it needs to be adequate for the machine it serves... so that there is no excessive build-up of material unnecessarily. If the tools are in your own shop, the same applies... do not short-change yourself in the safety dept. A savings of a few dollars for a machine without brakes, is not worth the aggravation and life-long missing of digits... or limbs!!!

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was using a random orbit sander on my sanding downdraft table and suddenly had severe chest pain. The emergency room diagnosed me as having heart pain from a lack of oxygen caused by a severe asthma attack. Additional testing showed my lungs have less than half the normal capacity for someone my age and size, my sinuses were so full of growths I had to have immediate surgery, and my lungs were so badly damaged that my lungs no longer self clear. I was put on a multitude of expensive medications and live with nitroglycerin and inhalants in my pocket in case of more chest pain. Even after the sinus surgery, I continued to get worse with one respiratory infection after another finally ending up with severe double pneumonia. Treating that required so many steroids I now have cataracts in both eyes and almost no up close vision, so need both lenses replaced. I now can not tolerate any exposure to dust, smoke, or even smog, live on oxygen and may never do any woodworking again. I paid to have an air quality inspector test my one-person shop. He said my dust collector, fine filter bags and air filter I bought to keep my shop dust free, acted as dust pumps filling my shop and attached home with under 30 micron dust that has recently been shown to cause asthma, allergic reactions, polyps, and even cancer.

Advice

Chip collection can be done just fine by using any old 1/2 hp or larger dust collector, but if you are going to save your lungs, then in even a small one person-one machine at a time shop, you need a powerful 2-3 hp blower with at least a 12" impeller that collects the dust at its source with good hoods and big diameter duct runs (6" minimum). That needs to be connected to a cyclone that exhausts either outside or into a certified fine (0.5 micron or better) cartridge filter. Always wear a dust mask when doing any machining or sanding that produces fine dust and keep that mask on for at least a couple of hours after. Always use a shop air cleaner and let it run for at least 2-3 hours after you make any dust.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was making custom raised panel kitchen cabinets when I went to Home Depot to get some 3/4" maple veneer plywood. Instead of asking a clerk to help me get a sheet off a high shelf, I stupidly tried to get it myself. The 50 pound sheet fell off the shelf and landed directly on my foot, where I was wearing open-toed shoes. Result: A broken big toe, a cast for 6 months, a lost big toenail, and a permanent limp when I walk.

Advice

I use power tools and shop equipment all of the time (I recently made 200+ dado cuts on the table saw in one setting). I take my time with setup and keep my hands away from the blade. I think about what would happen if something slips and prepare accordingly. So what am I doing when I get hurt? Im in a Home Depot! All because I couldn't take the time to find a clerk (I know it can sometimes be almost impossible). Some advice: 1. If something is too big, bulky, or heavy to move, ignore all of your instincts (if you are a guy) to do it yourself and GET SOME HELP. 2. Before doing something, stop and think about what could happen if something went wrong. I always do this with power tools and now do it at Home Depot too. I even started using safety goggles when mowing the lawn, and sure enough, the lawn mower threw something that would have hit me in my eye had I not been wearing

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Hurt but OK

Description

I was using one of those 22 caliber concrete nail "guns" to mount a piece of material into brick. All seemed well and decent, I had earplugs and eye-protection in their proper position and proceeded to "shoot". Being a right-hander my right hand was on the trigger where it should be and my left hand supported the rest of the tool where it shouldn't be. Upon blasting the nail in the "plunger rod" portion of the tool did its thing within the cylindrical portion that holds it in place. The action was so fast that the injury wasn't apparent until moments later, my left hand was missing a 1X1" slab that measured about 1/8" thick. The plunger action sucked my skin right into the cylinder and promptly "chunked" it in the aforementioned dimensions.

Advice

Well, I reckon those tool engineers put handles on tools for your hands. The action of a tool that only operates for a split second is not as obvious as blades spinning, bitturning, chisels gouging and so on.. Additionally I suggest that you have a good look at any tool in its dormant state and determine what action takes place before proceeding. Yet another suggestion: WEAR GLOVES when doing any work that doesn' require dexterity.

Tool Type Other

Experience Intermediate

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

A guy I was working with was nailing a joist hanger to a microlam. On about his third or fourth nail he missed and the nail bounced off the board and stuck in his cornea. He fell to the ground and pulled the nail out. The medical term was called "deflation of the globe". It was gross. Fortunately the good doctors at UNC Memorial Hospital were able to repair the damage with no permanent damage.

Advice

If you don't wear safety glasses at least wear shades.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was working in my shop when I needed a small ladder. I have a small ladder in the basement, rather than take the time to go get it I opened my portable workbench to stand on. Even though it says not to use it as a ladder, I ignored the message and climbed up on it like I have several times in the past. It gave way and I fell head first. I believe I landed on the back of my head and neck. I was knocked out for an unknown time. I was home alone at the time and laid there for 3 hours after I came to. I couldn't move my legs and had very little movement of my arms. When My wife got home she called 911 and rushed me to the hospital where they determined that my spinal column was dislocated, which put pressure on my spinal cord and I was paralyzed from the chest down. They did surgery and the next day I was sent to a spinal rehab center in Atlanta, GA. On the way down in the ambulance I had a major heart attack. I spent 5 months in the hospital. My accident happened March 27 2001. I have regained some use of my hands and arms, but they are not nearly as strong or flexible as they used to be. I have just started going back to the shop doing small jobs like refinishing small shelves etc. I am 66 years old and will probably spend the rest of my life in a power wheelchair. I don't blame anybody but me for my accident.

Advice

I think almost everyone takes chances and never think what the consequences could be. Any time you take shortcuts that involve safety, remember that 1 minute was about all the time I would have saved and it could happen to you.

Tool Type Other

Experience Intermediate

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was in school working on a big project for class. I was building a hover craft. I was using the spindle sander and not really paying attention and talking to my friend when I pushed too hard and it took my finger. It was lodged under the guard and I had to pull it out up side down. It took all the skin off my finger down to the knuckle.

Advice

Pay attention to your work.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was cutting a tenon with a Dozuki hand saw. The board was wide and vibrating while cutting. I braced the board with my left hand against the workbench with my hand below and to the left of the saw blade. Towards the end of the cut the wood broke away unexpectedly and the saw blade grazed the top of my left hand. The saw was so sharp I did not feel any pain before or after the cut. I sliced all the way down to the bone and tendon. Fortunately I did not damage either. I did sever a nerve bundle. The cut required five stitches. Half of my left index finger has no sense of feeling. I am told this should return within a year.

Advice

I have made this cut hundreds of times with no problems. I have always considered my hand saws some of my safest tools. They are sharp and just like any other tool, keep your body parts out of its path.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Intermediate

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

Trimming the leg of a bench with a handsaw from the 'wrong' side. I was sawing with my left hand and the waste was supported by my right hand. Right hand was very close to the cut because of the small amount of wood to trim off. On completion of cut the thumb of the right hand was in the way. Saw buried itself in the anterior part of the right thumb at the knuckle. 13 stitches were required to close a crescent shaped ragged cut. Luckily, no tenon damage. In speaking with old timers it seems that this was a common wound 75+ years ago before the advent of widespread electric handsaws.

Advice

Don't use a tool with the non working hand anywhere near the danger zone. Don't rush yourself to get something complete. If I had just walked around to the other side of the bench, or moved the piece to a more convenient location, I would have had my right hand out of harms way. Handtools are safer, but not safe. Don't be complacent with handtools. An electric saw might have taken off the thumb, but losing the use of a thumb by severing tenons with a handsaw is almost as crippling.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

This isn't exactly woodworking, but what the hey. Standing behind my father as he's cutting a bushing off the end of a brass pipe with a hacksaw. Dad went to gunsmith's school, very good-experienced with hand tools. I saw his left hand under the pipe in a strange position, but didn't think anything of it until I swear I saw the blade complete the cut and continue into the meaty part of his palm at the base of the thumb. Dad, very calm, just stood there for a second while I wondered if I was seeing things, then turns to me, spreads open the flesh, and says, "Looks like raw steak, doesn't it? Why don't you go get a wet washcloth, and tell mom to get her car keys." Several stiches needed, no permanent damage done.

Advice

Pay attention to line-of-fire, powered tools or not.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Beginner

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I had just had a meeting with a problem employee. The meeting went well, I gave praise where due and criticism where necessary. It was back to business as usual. Three hours later I received a call from the same employee. It went like this: "Hello. uh, I think I need stitches. (Immediately I thought table saw)

"Are you ok?!"

"uh, ya"

"What happened?!?"

" I uh, I uh, hit myself with a....a hammer"

" Excuse me, a HAMMER?" (I calmed down and thought blood blister) REALLY?"

"Yes a hammer. I was trying to get a piece of wood to fit tight so I cut it heavy and tried to beat it in. On the last heavy, I'm gonna get this B@#\$!#D to fit if it kills me swing. I hit the last knuckle of my middle finger. There's blood everywhere"

Advice

Dont hire ill tempered non hammer using boobs (sorry)

Tool Type Other

Experience Advanced

Injury Severity Needed Medical Attention

Description

My wood glue container had a blob of hardened glue on the tip of the nozzle. As my other hand was holding something else, I bit the piece of glue off with my teeth. It came off neatly but when I spat the blob out into my hand there was a piece of porcelain along with it, yep, half of my crown. No real physical pain done except for the \$980.00 dental charge on my Visa card

Advice

Use your teeth for mastication and save your cash to buy the new tool you've been dreaming of.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Close Call

Description

I had a contract to erect a custom picket fence around a garden. The garden was so overgrown that I had to clear out lots of bushes even to be able to measure up for the fence. The owner wanted to work with me on the clearing to cut costs and to check which plants to keep. I wrote up a full HAACP sheet for the whole job before work started - "Scratches from vegetation; low; Wear PPE, including glasses", it says. I wore steel capped boots, overalls, chainsaw hard hat with ear defenders, gloves and plastic bifocal safety glasses. I cut a thicket of brambles with a hedgetrimmer, switched it off. I bundled up the trimmings with both arms and pushed them over the top of the bushes for the owner to take them from me and carry them away. As he pulled them away, a bamboo stem growing in the ground, pulled over by the bundle, came free and whipped toward me. It had previously been trimmed short, so was thick and sharp at the top. The end passed just under the rim of my helmet and whacked the centre of my safety glasses in front of my left eye, slamming them against my face. I didn't even have time to blink. The mark on my glasses was slap bang in the middle of my eye. And I hadn't even got to the "dangerous" part of the job with the power saws and nail guns.

Advice

Because I was wearing the glasses, I walked away with a rueful grin instead of losing my eye. Stop and think and write up the HAACP sheet and then do what it says, even for the easy part of the job.

Tool Type

Other

Experience

Advanced

Injury Severity

Needed Medical Attention

Description

I was preparing to work one cold winter afternoon and fired up a new 200,000 BTU propane convection heater I had recently purchased. For some reason this day I decided to warm up a little right next to it. I was about 3 feet away. Instead of my normal wool jacket or cotton shopcoat I was wearing a housecoat-shirt which turned out to be synthetic.

After only a few minutes near the heater it began to. . . feel wrong. A few seconds later I noticed wisps of smoke over my shoulder. I stepped away from the heater quickly but could now still feel heat and assumed in another few seconds I would be ablaze. I dropped and rolled as we so often have heard, and it seemed to work but as I got up off the concrete floor it now burst into flame. The outer shell must have been dripping off my back but I didn't have time to do anything else but try to roll again. This time I seemed to extinguish the flames and also iron the molten plastic into my back. The pain was alarming. I was able to open the front and pull off the charred remains and drop them to the floor. I shut off the heater and ran into the house to assess the damage. I soaked a towel in cold water and applied it to the burn. Figured I had enough time in shock to make the 20 minute drive to the nearest urgent care before it began to hurt too much. Made it to the place without incident. They first planned to send me to the local hospital but they passed on it too and referred me to the best regional burn unit around, a 90 mile ride.

Advice

I am a novice woodworker but a seasoned welder with a lot of experience around propane appliances, even building some, in the form of hot air balloon burners. To say "I should have known better" is an understatement of epic proportions.

We pay a lot of attention to typical safety gear, and though I subconsciously must have known not to wear a shirt like that - also new- in the shop environment, I did not pay attention.

This has been a serious drag, but I am lucky I did the best I could to protect myself. Four days in the burn ICU, 2 in a recovery room, untold tens of thousands of dollars. I was released only when I could stand a dressing change without IV painkillers. My back looks like I went hunting with Dick Cheney but couldn't run away fast enough.