Tool Box Talk

Angle Grinder Safety

With angle grinders, incidents can happen in the blink of an eye.

It is important to be aware of the tool you are using, and the risks associated with them.

A worker was using a hand-held grinder fitted with a grinding stone. The grinder's guard was removed, as the stone was too large for the tool. The stone's maximum RPM. rating was also lower than the grinder's. As the worker started to grind, the stone broke, and pieces of stone struck and injured him.

Another worker was cutting part of a structure with a grinder and a 'zip cut wheel". The wheel binded and broke, and a piece flew off, striking the worker's arm. The zip cut wheel was the correct type and size for the tool, and the worker was wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Angle grinders have several functions including sanding, grinding and cutting processes, depending on the type of disc used. When operating, the cutting or grinding disc may come into contact with a body part, or shatter and throw off pieces at extremely high speed. An operator could easily sustain cuts, abrasions, burns or eye injuries.

Recommended Preventive Action

- Ensure workers are **adequately trained** to safely use grinders. Grinders are to be operated within the manufacturer's stated range of operating speed.
- Abrasive stones, discs, and wheels should always include complete product information so they can be used properly.
- **Always** wear adequate eye and face protection, such as a full-face shield, when using a grinder. Hearing protection, protective footwear and adequate body covering must also be worn.
- Allow newly mounted discs to run free for one minute before cutting or grinding.
- Never apply pressure to stop a disc from spinning.
- Ensure work items are rigidly supported.
- Do not use a cutting disc for grinding, and vice versa.
- Position your body to reduce exposure to flying materials and to shield yourself in case of wheel failure or kickback.
- Discs should be stored and handled carefully to avoid damage.
- Regularly inspect angle grinders for:
    - Correct fitting guard and handle
    - Worn out or damaged discs must be discarded
    - Damage to electrical lead or plug end
    - Disc selection: They must be suitable for the material (I.e. steel masonry, etc.), the correct size for the grinder (this includes center hole diameter), and compatibility with the grinders maximum RPM
    - Flange and flange nuts must suit the disc and be in good condition

Sources:

- https://www.worksafenb.ca/docs/grinder-safety.html

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When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.