Hand and Power Tools Toolbox Talk

Key points, do's and don'ts, and questions with answers. The attendance sign-off sheet is on the last page.

Asked to show your toolbox talk records? The Site Book keeps each talk and its signatures with the job, on Pro: **thesitebook.co.uk/features/toolbox-talks**

Key points to cover

- Always use the right tool for the job — improvised tools and wrong-tool use cause a disproportionate number of injuries
- All power tools must be inspected before each use and formally inspected at regular intervals
- Portable electrical tools on construction sites should be battery-powered or run from a 110V centre-tapped earth (CTE) supply
- Cutting discs, blades, and abrasive wheels must be correctly rated for the tool and the material being cut
- Guards must be in place on all power tools — never remove, disable, or modify a guard
- Workers must be trained and competent to use any power tool they operate — read the manufacturer's instructions

Do's and don'ts

Do

- Inspect tools before every use and reject any that are damaged
- Use the correct PPE for the tool — goggles for grinding, hearing protection for loud tools, dust masks for cutting
- Ensure cutting discs and blades are correctly rated for the tool speed and material
- Disconnect power tools from the supply before changing blades, bits, or accessories
- Store tools securely when not in use — clean, dry, and in their designated location

Don't

- Never remove or disable guards on power tools
- Don't use DIY or domestic 230V tools on site — they aren't suitable for site conditions; use 110V CTE or battery tools
- Never carry a power tool by its cable or hose
- Never use a tool for a purpose it was not designed for
- Never use a damaged cutting disc, bent blade, or mushroomed chisel head

Questions to check understanding

Ask each question and let the crew answer before you read out the answer.

Q1. Why should electrical tools on construction sites be 110V or battery-powered?

Answer: Because construction sites are classed as harsh environments with increased risk of electric shock (wet conditions, damaged cables, incomplete electrical installations). 110V tools supplied through a centre-tapped earth transformer deliver only 55V to earth, which significantly reduces the risk of fatal electric shock compared to 230V mains tools.

Q2. What should you do before changing a blade or disc on a power tool?

Answer: Disconnect the tool from the power supply (unplug it or remove the battery). Wait for any moving parts to stop completely. Check the replacement blade or disc is correctly rated for the tool speed (RPM) and the material being cut. Fit the blade or disc according to the manufacturer's instructions and ensure the guard is correctly repositioned.

Q3. What should you check during a pre-use inspection of a power tool?

Answer: Check the cable for damage, cuts, or fraying. Check the plug is intact and the correct fuse is fitted. Ensure all guards are in place and secure. Check the trigger or switch operates correctly (including dead-man's switch). Check that cutting blades or discs are in good condition and correctly fitted. Check the tool has a current PAT test label if required.

Q4. Why should guards never be removed from power tools?

Answer: Guards are designed to prevent contact with dangerous moving parts such as spinning blades, discs, and drill bits. Removing a guard exposes the operator and nearby workers to the risk of serious injury including lacerations, amputations, and eye injuries from flying fragments. It is also a breach of PUWER 1998 Regulation 11.

Attendance sign-off sheet: Hand and Power Tools Toolbox Talk

Everyone who attended prints their name and signs to confirm they received this talk.

Date _____ **Time** _____

Site or location _____ **Presented by** _____

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Presenter's signature _____

This is general guidance for UK construction sites. Check it against your own risk assessment, method statement and the site before you deliver it. Toolbox talk from The Site Book, reviewed 26 October 2026. Read it online at thesitebook.co.uk/toolbox-talks/hand-and-power-tools.