

#30 HAND-SAW SAFETY

According to U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission data, approximately 4,500 people nationwide received hospital treatment for hand-saw injuries during 2006. Of this total, about 2,900 of the injuries involved lacerations to fingers. Other injuries included hand and thumb lacerations. Most of these hand-saw injuries were due to operator error or inattention and could have been avoided.

Hand-Saw Safety

- Prior to use, always inspect hand saws for defects such as splintered or cracked handles, missing saw-blade teeth, loose saw-blade connections, and bent saw blades or frame handles.
- If a hand saw fails your pre-use inspection, notify your group leader, parent, or guardian. Do not use the hand saw until it has been repaired.
- A preferred safety practice is to wear eye protection when using a hand saw.
- Do not test saw teeth on hands or fingers to determine whether a hand saw is sharp.
- Use the proper type of hand saw for the material to be cut or type of cut to be made. For example, use a rip hand-saw for cutting along the grain of the wood and a cross-cut hand-saw for cutting across the grain of the wood.
- Select the correct type of hacksaw blade for the type of material to be cut.



*Photographs Courtesy of the
University of California 4-H Archives*



- When preparing to cut wood, inspect the wood stock for nails or other imbedded objects that could damage the hand saw.
- Begin cutting by starting carefully and slowly to prevent the saw blade from jumping or binding.
- When using a pruning hand-saw, do not cut limbs or branches above your head and use your free hand to hold the limb or branch while sawing.
- Place stock in vise or hold stock firmly when sawing. Use a helper or bench to support long stock.
- Use the length of the blade during each saw stroke.
- Always carry a hand saw by its handle with the saw end pointed down.
- Keep all hand-saw blades sharp and clean. Also, keep hacksaw blades lightly oiled.
- When finished with the hand saw, return it to its assigned storage place.
- If you suffer an injury while using a hand saw, tell your volunteer leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.