The Right Tool for the Job

Introduction:

What is the best tool for the job? Tools are necessary for performing a job, and choosing the correct tool is important. Investing in the correct tools and equipment to accomplish a task results in completing the job successfully with minimal risk of injury. Using the wrong tool for a specific job can result in injury, damage to the product, loss of production, and increase in cost for the company.

Discussion Points:

- Choose the correct tool for the job
- Choosing the wrong tool can result in serious injury
- Adapting or using “cheaters” is not appropriate in the workplace
- Ensuring the worker uses the right tool is important for success

Discussion:

Frequently, we see people improvising or not using a device as it was intended. Adapting or using “cheaters” is not appropriate, especially in the workplace. When it comes to performing a task, it is common to know that a ladder is used to climb, a hammer is used to pound a nail, and a screwdriver is used to drive a screw. Yet, people will choose to use a chair instead of a ladder, a stone or a pair of pliers instead of a hammer, a knife instead of a screwdriver, and a screwdriver instead of a chisel. Choosing to use a less effective device often comes from a lack of effort to find the correct tool to perform the task. Performing the job using the right tool will most often result in positive accomplishments, and will be worth the delay in finding the correct tool for the job.

OSHA emphasizes hand and power tool safety in order to reduce or eliminate hazards associated with performing a job and the potential risk for severe injury when tools are used or maintained improperly. Employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace for employees. Supervisors are responsible for training, supervising, and enforcing the rules. There are consequences for all behaviors and safety should always be of concern when performing a task. Using the wrong device can be stopped by providing the proper tool for the job. If any tools are worn out, malfunctioning, or must be “jury-rigged” in any way to make them work, get rid of them and replace them with new ones. All employees should receive proper training for tools that will be used on the job. Always use the tool according to manufacturer’s guidelines, and remember to use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, goggles, glasses, or face shields. To avoid injury, it is best to ensure the right tool is selected and the correct accessories are being used with the tool. Choose the right tool for the right job; the “good enough” approach really isn’t good enough.

As always, stay safe out there!