All of us have used hand and power tools at some point. They are very useful and commonplace. However, when not used properly they can cause injuries ranging from cuts, electric shock, or worse. Protect yourself and those around you by following these simple precautions.

Always

- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use. Do not use power tools that you have not been trained to use or without instruction from a shop technician or instructor.

- Use the right tool for the job. For example, don’t use a screwdriver as a chisel or don’t use pliers as a wrench.

- Be careful when carrying or transporting sharp tools. Walk with the sharp parts facing down and away from your body, and if possible, sheath or cover the sharp or pointy parts. If you have to climb with the sharp tool, carry the sheathed tool in a tool belt.

- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE): safety glasses to protect your eyes when using any tools and safety goggles when using tools that will create dusty conditions. Consider a dust mask but check with your physician first. Wear earmuffs or earplugs when using noisy power tools.

- Avoid creating a trip hazard by keeping the electrical cord away from walkways or taping the electrical cord or an extension cord to the floor if it passes through a walkway.

- Make sure the power tool is in the "off" position before plugging it in.

- Tie back long hair and avoid wearing loose clothing and jewelry.

- Store the tools in the proper place after each use.

Please contact your shop technician or Katherine Perkins (perkinsk@newschool.edu), Environmental Health and Safety Office of Facilities Management, if you have any questions about the information on this sheet.

For more information on any health issue, contact Wellness and Health Promotion, Student Health Services at wellness@newschool.edu or 212.229.1671, option 4.
Always (continued)

▶ Clean up your work area and the floor after using the tools.

▶ Use an electrical outlet equipped with a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) or attach a portable GFCI. The GFCI will quickly interrupt the electrical power within a fraction of a second if it detects an imbalance in the circuit due to leakage of current to ground. Be particularly careful of electrocution when using power tools near a water source or in a damp environment.

▶ All power tools should be listed by Underwriter's Lab (UL), and either double insulated or grounded with a 3-pronged plug. Look for these symbols to verify that they are double insulated (left) and UL-listed (right).

Never

▶ Use damaged tools. Inspect all tools before using them to check for any defects or potential safety issues such as frayed electrical cords, cracked or damaged power tool housing, missing safety guards, or missing prongs.

▶ Attempt to repair damaged tools yourself; it’s safer to replace it with an undamaged tool.

▶ Carry a power tool by its cord or unplug it by pulling the cord.

▶ Use power tools while talking to others or while distracted.

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