

## Utility Knife Safety



Box cutters and utility knives are among the most commonly used tools at work. They are typically small, lightweight and inexpensive – making them ideal portable tools. Unfortunately, the same characteristics that make these tools practical to use also make them susceptible to unsafe use and storage.

### Here Are Some Tips for Using Utility Knives Safely

- Only use the utility knives and blades provided for you by your employer. Do not use knives, blades or scissors from home.
- Check the work area to make sure it's suitable.
  - Is there enough light so you can see what you're doing?
  - Is there enough space to work safely?
  - Is the area free of distractions that could cause an accident?
- Focus on the task! Pay attention while you cut. If your mind wanders for even a moment, you could be cut.
- Make sure the handle offers a good grip. Wipe it down if it's wet, oily or tacky.
- Always cut away from yourself. This is an obvious point yet it is the most common reason for accidents.
- Keep your free hand, forearm and the rest of your body clear of the cutting path.
- When using a knife to cut through thick material, make several passes cutting a little deeper into the material with each pass.
- Do not use blades as screwdrivers or to pry something open. Blades are brittle and can easily snap.
- Don't carry an exposed knife around in your hand.
- If a knife slips out of your hand, don't attempt to catch it. There is no guarantee you will catch the handle.
- Make sure your knife blade is sharp. A dull knife is more dangerous than a sharp one as it is more apt to snag and pull, making the cut less controlled.
- Make sure the blade is properly seated in the knife.
- Dispose of dull or dirty blades in the proper receptacle. If you need to change the blade, pull out the blade from the dull side, and slide the new one in the top of the holder.
- Keep box cutters/knives in proper storage areas, with blades retracted, when not in use.
- If someone is cut and blood is spilled, isolate the area immediately and tell your manager.

### **Beware !!! Retract the Blade !!!**

Because of their small size, people tend to carry them in a pocket or toss them haphazardly on a shelf. This can lead to serious lacerations if the knife blade is exposed when the knife is retrieved.