

TOOLBOX TALK NO.58

Retractable Stanley Knives



Stanley knives are extremely useful tools for cutting and trimming a variety of materials on site however nearly 40% of all injuries are attributed to manual workshop tools, which include knives with or without retractable blades. It is important that you treat this tool with respect (a tool that can cut you to the bone in an instant) and follow basic safety procedures whilst carrying out your task.

General precautions:

The following are safety precautions to bear in mind when using retractable Stanley knives:

1. Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes in case a blade breaks.
2. Always use a sharp blade, they are safer than a blunt blade.
3. Wear cut resistant gloves and sleeves to at least a level 5 to protect your hands and arms.
4. Always hand a safety knife to your colleague with the handle first.
5. Use one of the newer model self-retracting blade knives.
6. Do not apply too much pressure on the blade
7. Follow the manufacturer's instructions when changing the blades.
8. Dispose of dull blades in a puncture resistant container.
9. Don't use safety knives to meddle loose objects.
10. Select the correct blade for the job. A flat end could be used for trimming and scoring but to cut a sheet of material, you should consider using a hook blade.
11. Provide safe storage for knives and blades.
12. Consider your working environment – Good lighting, floor surface is level, keep floors and workspace free of debris.
13. Eliminate the risk where possible to reduce the use of hand knives from all or part of the task.

All activities involving the use of Stanley knives must be fully risk assessed. You must ask your manager to see the risk assessment before starting to use the knife. Once you have read, understood and signed the risk assessment, you have committed to using the knife in a safe way.

Common accidents:

- Drawing the knife towards you instead of away from your body.
- Working with a dull blade – this requires more pressure, increasing the potential for injury
- Trying to cut more than the knife can handle.
- Improper storing of the knife with the blade extended
- Failing to wear the appropriate PPE
- Failure to inspect the knife before use.

There have been cases whereby operatives have suffered injuries from exposed blade tips. This is because the blades did not completely retract into the handle. That is why it is important for workers to use the proper size blades or replace defective retraction mechanisms.

First Aid

A serious stabbing injury can result in heavy external and internal bleeding, particularly if a main artery is punctured. Prompt first aid action could save a life. At least one person who is trained to deal with stabbing injuries and heavy bleeding should be available on site to provide first aid.

APPROVED KNIVES



BANNED KNIVES

