

## **TOOLBOX TALK #16**

### **PREVENTING CUTS AND LACERATIONS**

Cuts and lacerations are common workplace injuries. In fact, about 30% of all workplace injuries involve cuts or lacerations, and approximately 70% of those are to the hands or fingers, according to the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation. These injuries can range from minor abrasions that require first aid to serious or life-threatening puncture wounds, deep lacerations or amputation injuries.

#### **How workers get hurt**

A cut or laceration can occur a number of ways on the job. A worker may use the wrong tool for the job or a tool that's in poor condition. Or, he or she might be working on a machine that has missing or improperly adjusted guards. Poor lighting, clutter and debris also can play a part, as can lack of training, working too fast, failure to wear proper personal protective equipment and not following safety procedures.

#### **Keep them safe**

Employers need to establish work procedures to identify and control worker exposure to cut and laceration hazards. Tips from the Ohio BWC include:

- Use the right tool for the job. Inspect it thoroughly before starting work.
- Make sure the tool is secure at all times while cutting, and never hold the item being cut in your hand. Keep the non-cutting hand clear of the path of the cut.
- Ensure blades are sharp – dull blades require more force to use, thus increasing the risk of incidents.
- Wear necessary PPE, including eyewear, gloves and long-sleeved shirts.
- Never use a cutting blade as a screwdriver, pry bar or chisel.
- Don't leave exposed blades unattended, and keep tools with blades in a closed position when not in use.
- Use a separate drawer for sharp tools.