

## **TOOLBOX TALK #27**

### **IT'S HAMMER TIME!**

If you use hammers on the job, are you using them safely? If not, serious injuries can occur. The international Association of Drilling Contractors offers the following tips on hammer safety:

- Make sure you're using the proper type of hammer for the task.
- Don't use a hammer that has a mushroomed head or one that isn't firmly attached to the handle. Repair or replace it.
- Keep your hands and the hammer handle clean.
- Replacing a wooden handle? Apply glue to the wedge before driving it into the handle.
- Don't misuse hammer handles – they're meant only for gripping.
- Don't "choke" the handle (i.e., hold the hammer close to the head). This will result in a less effective strike and increase the risk of injury. Instead, grip the hammer close to the end of the handle to make the weight of the tool work best for you.
- Always wear PPE when using a hammer, specifically safety glasses or goggles. A flying nail or other flying material can cause the loss of an eye.
- Hold nails near the head when driving them and begin with a light tap. Make sure to always use a flat-faced hammer when driving nails – never a machinist's hammer.
- Never strike a hardened object, such as a wrench, with a hammer. Instead, use a rawhide, wood or rubber hammer.
- Make sure you have an unobstructed swing and watch out for overhead obstructions before swinging a hammer.

If you are using a sledge hammer, the association recommends enlisting the help of another worker. The helper should use a holding device, such as tongs, to secure the object being hit. This person also should stay to the side – never in front – of the worker swinging the hammer. Make sure no one is standing within range of the swing, and keep unnecessary personnel out of the area.