



# CHISEL SAFETY

Toolbox Talks for the members of Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities

Summer 2015

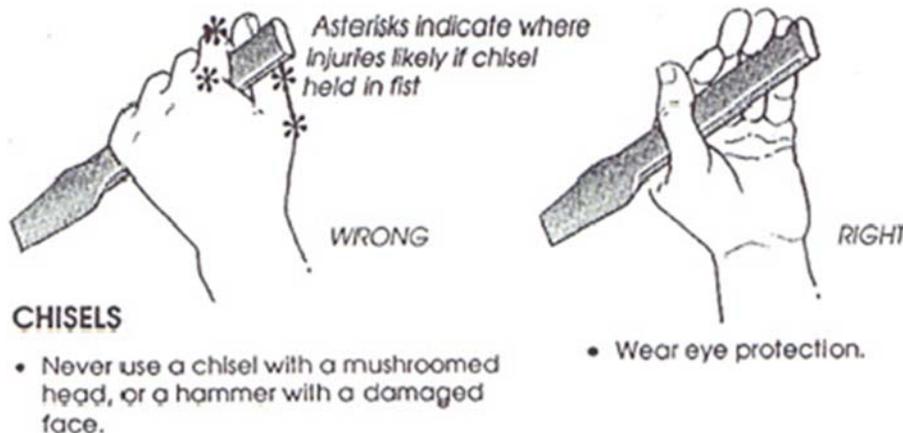
## Fingers get smashed and knuckles get skinned or even broken when a chisel isn't used properly.

The first thing to do when selecting a chisel is to inspect it prior to use. Don't use it if the head is mushroomed or the cutting edge is nicked. Be sure it isn't too short. If it is too short, the hazard is increased. It should be long enough to allow a full four finger grip with clearance of at least 2 inches from the head of the chisel and similar clearance from the work.

Be wary when selecting a chisel. Don't use it if the head is mushroomed or the cutting edge is nicked. Chips from mushroomed heads can quickly chip off on impact and turn into projectiles that may lead to serious injuries including imbedding into the skin or even a loss of an eye.

Other common injuries chisels can cause are musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) from hand-arm vibration. MSDs could possibly be tendonitis, which is inflammation of the elbow and wrist tendons, or carpal tunnel syndrome, which is compression of a wrist nerve, resulting in finger numbness and loss of hand strength.

The best solution to avoid all of these potential chisel related injuries would be to purchase chisels with hardened plastic striking caps. These caps will not only help alleviate vibration, but they will also eliminate mushrooming. It will also help to cut down on the sound levels of impacting the chisel head. Finally, the hardened plastic cap chisel heads provide a larger striking surface which will make it easier to hit the head, therefore it will cut down on the potential to strike fingers or knuckles accidentally.



- See illustration to be sure to hold a chisel properly. Most individuals make the mistake of holding a chisel incorrectly, which can lead to knuckle and finger impact injuries. Use anti-vibration gloves to reduce the potential for MSDs.

Loud pinging noises from chisel strikes can lead to hearing loss.