



# TOOLBOX TALK

Left-handers face a greater risk of accidents and repetitive motion injuries.



## Tools and Hazards for Left-Handed Users

Approximately 10% of the population is left-handed, including me! Left-handers have always had to adapt to a world designed for right-handers, including using a tool as simple as a measuring tape. Imagine reading a measuring tape that is upside down—that's only one example of why mistakes are made, and hazards are created using equipment that's not designed for you!

**Some of the other hazards listed by the Power Tool Institute include:**

### ■ Decreased Visibility

For cutting tools like table saws or shears, the blade and cut line may be obscured for a left-handed person, increasing the chance of an inaccurate or unsafe cut.

### ■ Reduced Control

Some tools, like right-handed circular saws, place the spinning blade on the inside of the hand when used by a left-hander. This position is awkward and can lead to a loss of control.

### ■ Accidental Activation

Safety buttons on some power tools are placed for a right-handed grip. When a left-hander grips the tool, their palm may accidentally push the continuous-run button, meaning the tool won't stop when the trigger is released.

### ■ Improper Body Mechanics

Reaching across the body to flip a switch or make an adjustment can force a worker into an off-balance position. A 2023 study found that left-handed workers using portable angle grinders adopted unsafe postures, leading to a higher risk of accidents.

### ■ Increased Strain and Fatigue

Using a tool with a non-dominant hand or adopting an uncomfortable grip increases strain on muscles and joints. This can lead to repetitive motion injuries.

Got a suggestion for a future topic?

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