

# Cutting edge knife skills for young workers

Young workers are often injured from:

- using stanley knives to open boxes or cut strapping tape or other materials
- using kitchen knives in food preparation
- working with sheets of metal in construction or manufacturing
- using cane knives when working on fruit farms.

In fact, almost one third of all injuries sustained by 15-24 year olds are cuts and lacerations from working with and using knives.

Knives can be dangerous and when you use them a lot you can get too comfortable and forget to work safely.

Following five simple rules for knife safety can prevent a lot of these injuries from happening. Keep these safety tips in mind next time you use a knife at work and, while you're at it, share them with your workmates.

## 1. Keep your knife sharp

Believe it or not, a sharp knife is a safer knife. Sharp knives take less effort to cut with which gives you better control. It's also less likely that the blade will slip free of the material you're cutting.



## 2. Store it safely

Don't risk one of your workmates getting hurt by a knife they didn't realise was there. Before putting it away, retract or sheath the knife if you can, then store it safely. Where possible, store knives in a knife block or on magnetic rack as storing them loose (e.g. in a drawer) is more likely to cause injury. Don't leave knives lying around, and don't put them in blind spots, like a sink full of water or a pen holder.

## 3. Let it fall

Don't try to catch a falling knife. It can be hard to ignore your reflexes, but there's no safe way to catch a knife.

## 4. Wear protective equipment

Cut resistant gloves are great protection if you're working with knives. Make sure they fit well and grip well. Aprons, gauntlets and closed in shoes are also a good idea. Ask your supervisor if they are supplied in your workplace.

## 5. Use the right tool for the job

Before you cut, check that you're using the right tool. Would scissors or pliers be safer? Different knives are designed for different tasks. Make sure you're using the right one for the job. Only use knives to cut, not to open tins or tighten screws.

