

Many workplace injuries have resulted from tools falling out of belts from heights and from workers falling and being impaled by a tool in an improperly loaded tool belt.

A tool belt that is properly arranged greatly improves convenience and productivity by having the required tools and fasteners at hand. However, to avoid creating hazards from lugging around tool belts overloaded with unneeded tools, careful thought must be given to the tools needed and the location where they will be used (such as on a roof or scaffold). Carry tools to a job in a toolbox and only load the tool belt with the tools and fasteners needed for the job at hand.

Following are some excellent tips for the safe use of tool belts:

- **Tool belts, bags, pouches, holsters, and other attachments** should be clean, well maintained, and fit properly. Inspect the tool belt daily prior to starting work and look for defects. If defects are discovered, have them repaired before using that tool or belt.
- **Ensure that appropriate holsters, bags, or pouches** for specialty tools are being used and are properly secured on the tool belt.
- **Use tools bags specific to your trade** whenever possible. They are designed for the specific tools used in that trade and make the job easier and safer. For example, a set of carpentry bags would not be appropriate for electrical work.
- **Take appropriate precautions** so that tools and supplies cannot fall out of the belt or pouch during work on elevated surfaces.
- **Hammer/axe loops** should be used and placed in a position that they do not hinder movement.
- **Tape measures** should be clipped securely or placed in a pouch designed to hold tape measures. Do not carry a tape measure in an open pouch designed for nails or screws. If a tape measure falls out of the bag and drops from a roof, ladder, or scaffold, you could injure a coworker.
- **Remove the belt** while climbing a ladder and hoist the tool belt up with a bucket and rope.
- **Do not carry tools** on a belt that it is not designed for (i.e., drills, screw guns, etc.)
- **When working at heights** using holsters for power tools with cords, keep the cord sets arranged to avoid trip hazards. It is sometimes a good idea to secure the tool to the belt with a safety line so the tool cannot get away from you.
- **Always check** that all sharp tool blades are closed or secured prior to carrying them in the tool belt.
- **Carry tools** and sharp objects with the pointed end in the bag or pouch to minimize the chance of impalement if you slip or fall.
- **Do not overload** your tool belt. Plan the activity and load the tool belt with only those tools necessary to complete the job.

Use the appropriate tool belt for your trade and be sure that tools being carried do not hinder movement or present a danger if you trip and fall. Plan the work sequence and load up only the tools and fasteners needed to complete that phase of work. When working at heights, extra care should be taken to avoid letting tools drop out of tool bags and possibly fall on coworkers.