SAFE WORK PROCEDURE - USING HAND TOOLS

All hand tools have the potential to cause injury.

- Hands, feet, and head
- Eyes
- Repetitive strain

Before commencing work check that:

- You have the best tool for the job. Specifically designed tools may be required for some jobs.
- The tool is free from any damage or excessive wear
- Handles are free from oil and dirt so a secure grip can be maintained.
- Tools work correctly. Eg. Pliers, spanners etc. open and close as they should
- If inexperienced, use only under supervision, and always ask for advice if you are unsure about the best tool for the job.

Wear appropriate PPE

Safety glasses, steel capped safety boots, gloves, long sleeves and trousers.

Using the tools

- Clear the work area of all trips and hazards
- Always keep your hands free from the tools where possible
- Never modify or alter a tool in any way from the manufacturers design

a. Spanners and shifters

- Choose the tool that properly fits the fastener that is to be turned. Using the correct size reduces the chance of slippage
- Use socket wrenches for hard-to-reach places
- Always try to pull on a spanner (instead of push) in case the fastener suddenly loosens

b. Pliers

- Do not substitute pliers for a wrench. Pliers can not grip nuts and bolts properly and will slip
- Never use pliers as a hammer or hammer on the handles. This will likely result in cracks or breaks
- Always cut at right angles. Never rock from side to side or bend the wire back and forth against the cutting edges

c. Hammers

- Remove from use any hammer showing signs of excessive wear such as cracks, chips or a mushroom head
- Match the proper type of hammer to the job
- Do not strike the surface at an angle. The hammer face should contact the striking surface squarely. Striking blows often lead to injury.

d. Screwdrivers

- Never use a screwdriver as a pry bar, chisel, punch, stirrer, or scraper
- Always use a screwdriver that properly fits the slot of the screw
- Dispose of any broken or worn screwdrivers
- Use magnetic or screw-holding screwdrivers in tight areas

- Where a hardened steel component requires impact to loosen or dislodge it, ensure the tool used (e.g., Hammer) is made from a softer material

Preventing occupational overuse syndrome

- Take regular rest breaks
- Wear gloves

Maintenance

Never operate hand tools that are faulty, damaged, or not properly adjusted.

- Check for wear regularly
- Ensure handles are clean and easy to grip

Remember if you are unsure, ask for advice