



TOOLS

Hand Tools

Using Them Safely

Farming has relied on hand tools for most of its history.

Hand tools are safer than mechanical powered devices, but caution is still important.

Maintenance

Keeping tools in a good condition extends the tools life

and also makes the job easier. The old time Navvies knew this when they were digging the canal networks. They used a small wooden scraper, that they called a “man” (the tool was called a man because its effect was like having an extra man on the crew), to clean the mud from their shovels and spades. Each time you lift a muddy shovel you must also lift the mud, scraping the mud away and reducing the load carried over a day’s work.



- Putting tools away in a dirty condition encourages rust and can blunt sharpened tools.
- Metal surfaces should be clean, when not in use.
- Wooden handles should be wiped down with Raw Linseed Oil in the winter.
- Metal tools can also benefit from oil as it can prevent rust.



Power Tools

Using Them Safely (Electric and Fuel)

Powered tools are dangerous because they are designed to reduce work time by using speed or workload by power. Speed and force can both kill and so it is important for people who prefer to be alive, to read the manual first.

Let the machine work at its correct speed, rating to rush stuff always causes problems.

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Electric Tools

Electricity is a fundamental force, and it can kill people *especially* if there is any water involved. It is important to think about:

- ➔ Is the cable damaged?
Any break in the insulation could give a lethal shock if touched, especially if it has been on wet grass, etc.
- ➔ Does the power supply or tool have a circuit breaker?
*Muscle is controlled by electric signals from your brain, if you touch an electric source your hand may lock on to the item, because of the effect of the shock on your muscles, this can result in death as it is impossible to free yourself.
Circuit breakers can detect the power surge of a shock and can cut off the power.*
- ➔ Awareness of where the cable is also important.
Many people have cut the cable along with the hedge.

Fuel Tools: Petrol or Diesel

The main danger with these is the *flammability of the fuel*. Other risks are related to the toxicity of the fuel, so try to pour and mix them carefully.

*Always inspect a field device for leakages.
Always double check that fuel caps are properly screwed down tight.
All fuel lines should also be inspected as they can degrade or come loose.*

Maintenance

The same as hand tools, power tools like to be kept clean if you want them to last. Keeping tools in a good condition extends the tools life and also makes the job easier.

- Petrol based tools should not be left full of fuel for extended periods. At the start of Winter drain the fuel to prevent it damaging the engine, washers etc.
- Biodegradable two-stroke oil and chain saw oils are available from some of the better manufacturers.
- Chainsaws must be used sharp, and never force the blade, but let the machine work at its correct rate. Use gauges to sharpen the saw and always check for chain tension.

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