



# Safety Note

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



Safety Note #97

## HAND-SAW SAFETY



*Photograph Courtesy of Sierra  
Foothill REC*

According to U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission data, approximately 3,500 people nationwide received hospital treatment for hand-saw injuries during 2004. Of this total, about 1,300 of the injuries involved lacerations to fingers and hands. Other injuries included finger fractures and amputations, hand fractures, wrist, arm, and leg lacerations, and sprains to the lower back and trunk. The majority of these hand-saw injuries were due to operator error or inattention. California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 3302 (7) requires employees be trained on the tools they use in the workplace.

### Hand-Saw Precautions

- Prior to use, always inspect hand saws for defects such as splintered or cracked handles, missing saw-blade teeth, loose saw-blade connections, and bent saw blades or frame handles.
- Any saw with defects shall be removed from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete red tag with appropriate information and notify your supervisor.
- Always wear eye protection when using a hand saw.
- Do not test saw teeth on hands or fingers to determine whether a hand saw is sharp.
- Use the proper type of hand saw for the material to be cut or type of cut to be made. For example, use a rip hand-saw for cutting along the grain of the wood and a cross-cut hand-saw for cutting across the grain of the wood.
- Select the correct type of hacksaw blade for the type of material to be cut.
- When preparing to cut wood, inspect the wood stock for nails or other imbedded objects that could damage the hand saw.
- Begin cutting by starting carefully and slowly to prevent the saw blade from jumping or binding.
- When using a pruning hand-saw, do not cut limbs or branches above your head and use your free hand to hold the limb or branch while sawing.
- Place stock in vise or hold stock firmly when sawing. Use a helper or bench to support long stock.
- Use the length of the blade during each saw stroke.
- Always carry a hand saw by its handle with the saw end pointed down.
- Keep all hand-saw blades sharp and clean. Also, keep hacksaw blades lightly oiled.
- When finished with the hand saw, return it to its assigned storage place.



*Photograph Courtesy REC Administrative Office*