Portable Power Tools

(Safety Brief)

Copyright Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Current as of: 11/9/2026

PACIF has developed Safety Briefs to help municipal highway supervisors maintain a high level of safety and hazard awareness among employees. We recommend using these short "tailgate trainings" on a regular basis – and **at least once a month**. If you need a particular safety topic, please contact us at losscontrol@vlct.org.

Information for Supervisors

Portable power tools are commonly used by municipal highway, recreation and maintenance employees. As with any tool, safe use and operation relies on the employee being familiar with its features and understanding how to use it properly. Of course, the tool must also be in good operating condition.

Using tools becomes so routine, that it is not unusual for individuals to become desensitized to potential hazards. They may be so focused on accomplishing the task at hand, that they forget to check the tool itself to make sure that the safety features are functioning or that the power cord (if present) is intact. These are the types of reminders that we'll highlight below.

Talking Points for Training

Before Using the Tool

- Always inspect the tool before each use and check for obvious damage or cracks to the body, cord and plug defects. Make sure that all guarding (if part of the tool) is attached as designed and set at compliant distancing or orientation. Remove the tool from service if damaged or if guarding cannot be properly set.
- Always use the appropriate PPE for the task being completed, such as safety glasses with side shields, hearing protection, etc.

Copyright Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Current as of: 11/9/2026

- Plan to use the right tool for the job. Using the incorrect tool often increases the difficulty of the task and subjects the tool to potential breakage and the employee to injury.
- Read and familiarize yourself with the operator's manual.

Using the tool

- Be sure all portable electric tools are properly grounded using a 3-prong plug, or a double insulated cord. If using with an extension cord, plug into a GFCI outlet or use an extension cord equipped with a GFCI.
- Never remove the grounding prong from the tool (or extension cord)..
- Always disconnect the tool from the power source before changing accessories, blades or bits.
- Be aware of loose clothing or jewelry that could get caught in moving or rotating parts of the tool.
- Make sure you have proper illumination so you can see safely what you are doing while operating the tool.
- Be aware of the location of other employees when operating power tools and always use the tool in a way that does not place any portion of your body in a "compromised" position.
- Tools that throw sparks or hot metal should be used far away from flammable gasses, liquids, or other combustible materials.

Safety Training Attendance Roster

Trainer:	Training Date:
1.	9.
2.	10.
3.	11.

Copyright Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Current as of: 11/9/2026

4.	12.
5.	13.
6.	14.
7.	15.
8.	16.

Publication Date

01/26/2018

Copyright Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Current as of: 11/9/2026