



ARBORIST SHOP TALK

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More From Your Tools

Whether you are employed by someone else or run your own business, the success of your daily operations can be dependent on the tools you use and the condition they are in.

If you are the man on the job, the difference between a good, sharp, well oiled, splinter-less tool and a beat up dog, can make the difference between a good day and a good job, and an eight hour struggle that leaves you feeling mad at the world and indifferent as the quality of the job.

If you are an employer the difference between good tools and satisfied men and rough-to-use tools and disgruntled workers can mean a difference in dollars and cents for you.

But more important than either of those considerations is the fact that tools in poor condition are often dangerous or lead to dangerous improvisations by the people who must use them. For example: Two men go out on a job to do some light pruning. The pole-clip won't work right so one of them decides to use the root-loppers while standing on a creaky stepladder, borrowed from the customer or a neighbor. He falls and gets hurt.

Whose fault is it that defective tools ever reached the job site in the first place? The worker who fails to report a tool that is too dull or rusty or has a cracked or splintered handle? The foreman who knows the tools need attention but who gets out too early in the afternoon and in too late in the morning to ever get around to fixing them? Or is it the fault of the employer who doesn't get on-the-job enough to see for himself the condition things are in. They are all to blame, of course, but that *still* doesn't get the tools fixed, does it?

Here are some suggestions to help keep things ship shape on your operations.

If you are the worker on the job, check out every tool every time you use it. (Usually that only means looking

at it, or feeling the edge or teeth to make sure it is sharp). If it isn't okay, tell your foreman and ask for another or ask if you can sharpen it or repair it yourself before you use it. If he refuses that, you'll probably have to get by the best you can for the day, but insist it is repaired before you have to use it again. If it is obviously dangerous, (such as a sledge hammer or ax with badly cracked handle or loose head), courteously refuse to use it, period! (Don't worry about your boss getting mad at you. No court of law in the country would allow you to be fired because you refused to endanger yourself or others . . . and he knows it).

If you are a foreman or crew leader you should check out the equipment your crew uses, daily when it comes in. If it is faulty it should not go out again till repaired. Hand tools such as hand saws, pruning shears, etc. should be individually assigned. This will not only reduce loss and theft, but the tools will be better cared for usually if the users know *they* will always have to use them and account for loss or damage.

Every climber should have his *own* rope. He and he only should coil it up after each use. That way he personally can feel for nicks, or burns or other damage to the rope on which his own life depends.

When checking over hand tools, look for dull edges to be sharpened. Working parts to be oiled. Loose handles to be tightened up. Or cracked handles that make tools hard to use or are dangerous. Look for parts missing. Check pole-saws and pole-clippers for loose heads, dull blades, damaged pull ropes and splintery handles. Pole saw blades get slight bends which make them next to impossible to use, look carefully for them.

If you are the employer you should realize that keeping good equipment is as important to the success of your operation as is good personnel. By scrimping on tool maintenance, you will only out-cheap yourself in the long run.

Periodic in-the-field checks should include careful examination of the equipment condition. Your worker and foreman should know that you feel that their safety and working conditions are important to you.

If your operations are large enough perhaps you should incorporate a regular tool inspection and maintenance program. In any case you could have someone working on rainy days, on tool repair and maintenance.

It doesn't take any mental giant to see that everybody benefits from tools kept in good repair and everybody loses if they are not. Then what is everybody waiting for? There's nothing to it but do it!



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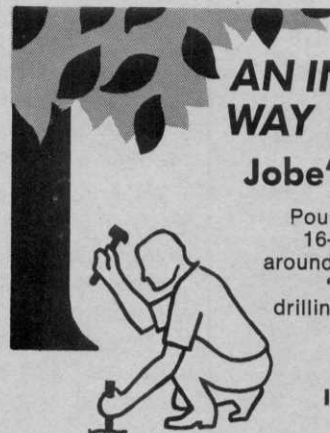
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