



January 15 — Sharp Where It Shouldn't Be

While grabbing a weld machine discovered a used skill saw blade left on top of the machine posing a potential cutting hazard for anyone not paying attention.

After inspecting the teeth and determining it's still in good condition, I locked the blade inside a tool cabinet out of harm's way.

The machine itself wasn't the hazard what was left on it was. Hands naturally go to the top, handles, or edges of equipment without much thought. A used saw blade blends into the background until it's contacted. When sharp objects are left in unexpected places, the injury usually happens before the person even realizes what they touched.

**A blade left where hands go first,
Turns a quick grab into the worst.
Put sharp things where they belong,
So hands stay whole the whole day long.**

This kind of hazard relies on surprise, not force.

Hazards

- Lacerations to hands and fingers
- Deep cuts from used or damaged blades
- Blood exposure and contamination of equipment
- Secondary injuries from startle response
- Repeat exposure for anyone who uses the equipment next

Stats

- Hand injuries are among the most common workplace injuries
- Lacerations frequently occur during handling and movement, not active cutting
- Poor housekeeping is a contributing factor in many recordable injuries
- Unexpected sharp-object contact increases injury severity

Words of Wisdom

- If it doesn't belong there, it's a hazard.
- Hands go where the eyes don't always look.

Pause and Think

People grab equipment the same way every time. That muscle memory is what makes sharp objects left behind so dangerous. A used blade on top of a machine isn't expected, so it isn't seen until it's felt. Good housekeeping isn't about neatness — it's about removing surprises from where hands naturally go.

- Where do your hands go without thinking?
- What items tend to get set down "just for a minute"?
- What's the next person likely to touch before they look?