



January 8 — Utility Knife/Cut Hazard

<p>Employee was using a utility knife to cut zip ties with no sleeves and was not a safety blade.</p>	<p>Had employee get wire cutters to cut the zip ties, explained to him that he needs to have sleeves when using a utility knife, also to the style of utility knife is not allowed.</p>
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The zip ties were small and the task felt simple, which is often when blade control gets relaxed. Cutting toward the body or supporting hand happens quickly when there's no resistance and no guardrail built into the tool. Without cut-resistant sleeves or a safety blade, there's nothing between a slip and a forearm or wrist injury. What feels like a minor task can turn into a deep cut in a fraction of a second.

**A zip tie's tight, the blade feels right,
One quick slip turns day into night.
Sleeves and safety slow the play,
So skin stays skin at end of day.**

This type of injury doesn't come from force it comes from speed, angle, and habit.

Hazards

- Lacerations to hands, wrists, and forearms
- Tendon or nerve damage from blade contact
- Loss of control when zip ties release suddenly
- Increased injury severity without cut-resistant sleeves
- Bleeding injuries requiring stitches or medical treatment

Stats

- Over 30% of hand lacerations on jobsites involve utility knives
- A large portion of these injuries occur during zip tie or packaging removal
- Cut-resistant sleeves and gloves significantly reduce severity of blade injuries
- Safety blades have been shown to reduce both frequency and depth of cuts

Words of Wisdom

- Blades don't care how small the task is.
- If there's nothing stopping the blade, your arm might be next.

Pause and Think

Small cutting tasks are where people rely most on muscle memory. The motion feels familiar, so the setup rarely changes — even when PPE or safer tools are available. When a zip tie snaps free, the blade keeps moving in the same direction, and whatever is in that path takes the hit. Slowing down just enough to change blade type, body position, or protection breaks that chain.

- Where does the blade go if it slips?
- What's between the blade and your body right now?
- Would this task look different if the cut took longer?