

Tool Box Talk – Portable Abrasive Grinding Wheels

- Welders use grinders often enough that it isn't hard to forget about the potential hazards that go along with using them.
- Abrasive wheels move at such a high rate of speed that they can remove flesh and launch potentially deadly wheel fragments when they break up.
- There are other hazards, too. Sparks are potential ignition sources and can cause eye injuries. Flying fragments or particles from a broken wheel can cause eye injuries as well.
- Before you start work, check the wheel to make sure it is properly and securely attached to the grinder.
- Make sure that the guard is in place and attached securely. It should cover at least half the grinding wheel.
- Don't use a grinder without a guard. Even though the abrasive wheel technology is better today than it was in the past, some wheels can still break. When they do, fragments can fly off the wheel at the speed of a bullet.
- Check to make sure that the size of the grinder wheel is compatible with the motor speed of the grinder. Doing so will prevent over-speed of the wheel, which is harmful to the grinder and could result in an injury.
- Make sure that there are no flammable materials around the area.
- Wear safety glasses and a face shield whenever you use a grinder.
- Make sure the grinder is running smoothly without vibration. If you sense a problem, take it out of service immediately and attach a "Danger—Do Not Use" tag to it so that no one else will use it. Ask your supervisor where to take it so that it can later be evaluated for replacement or repair.
- Keep a firm grip and apply pressure firmly, but don't apply so much pressure that the motor starts to lag and lower the RPM.
- It's best not to use the constant ON switch. That way if there is a problem, the wheel will slow to a stop as soon as you take your finger off the switch.