A plumber was tasked with the installation of support brackets for plumbing fixtures and was in the process of attaching the bracket to a wall stud. He was using a cordless drill/driver and self tapping screws for the operation. He had positioned the driver and was in the process of inserting a screw when his work glove was caught by the driver chuck, pulling his finger out of joint. He was transported to a nearby medical facility where he was treated and released to return to work.

LESSONS LEARNED

Power tools are timesaving and efficient work enhancements. We can hardly imagine what the installation of construction materials would be like without them. It is imperative to remember they are quite powerful and, if used improperly or inattentively, can cause injury. In this case, the worker placed his hand in a position that resulted in his glove being caught in the rotating mechanism of the drill.

Most power tools are designed to be used with both hands. Most are equipped with auxiliary handles that, when used, assure hands are placed well away from the moving parts of the equipment. Had the worker been using the auxiliary handle his hand would have been protected from the rotating portion of the drill and the injury would most likely not have occurred. If hand held power tools are not so equipped, then additional attention and diligence is necessary to assure your personal protective equipment and body parts do not become entangled.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ask your contractor about their expectations for power tool use. Ask about their expectations for glove use and hand positioning when using power tools.

2. Watch for tasks that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are people using power tools positioning their hands clear of any rotating parts? Are they using auxiliary handles when both hands are needed on the tool?

3. Share this Incident Alert with your contractor and ask them to share it with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff