INCIDENT ALERT

A carpenter was in the process of cutting 5/8” thick drywall for installation. He was using a utility knife and drywall square for the task. The drywall square was 48” long, and his technique was to place the square against the drywall then draw his blade down the square for the cut. The drywall sheet was staged against a wall, and cut was being made top to bottom along the width of the sheet. As he was cutting his square began to bow in the middle. He placed his left hand in the center of the square (below the knife) to flatten it against the sheet and continued to cut in the direction of his hand. The knife slipped and cut his middle and index finger of his left hand. He was transported to a nearby medical facility where he received stitches and was released to return to work.

LESSONS LEARNED

Several issues were identified during the incident investigation. First, the worker was wearing gloves, but they were not of a cut resistant design. Proper PPE selection may have helped minimize the injury. Second, after examining the square it was discovered there was a small nick in the area where the cut occurred. This nick may have contributed to the knife jumping the edge of the square and crossing the workers hand. If the square had been inspected before use the nick might have been found and another tool selected for the task. Third, it was identified that it is never a good practice to cut in the direction of a body part. Had the workers hand been placed above the blade the injury might not have occurred.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Discuss tool inspection and personal protective equipment selection with your contractors. Ask how these issues are reinforced during the planning process as it takes place at the crew level

2. Watch for activities that may result in similar injuries during your walk through. Are workers using knives to perform their tasks? Are they cutting away from their body parts? Are they using the proper gloves for their task? Have they developed a task plan for their work that addresses these hazards?

3. Encourage your contractors to share and discuss this incident alert with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff