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INCIDENT ALERT

A carpenter was in the process of cutting 5/8” thick drywall for installation. He was using a utility knife for the task. He needed to make a cut parallel to the length of the drywall to trim it to the proper width. The drywall sheet was leaning on its edge against a corner. The worker placed his left arm across the top of the drywall sheet to steady it as he drew his knife parallel to the edge. At one point he felt the knife blade sticking and applied more force. The blade slipped out of the drywall and struck his left forearm below the wrist. He reported the injury to his supervisor and 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 not wearing gloves. It was felt by the team that gloves may not have eliminated the injury but may have minimized it. Second, the work piece was not being steadily secured. If it had been laid flat on a work support he would not have felt the need to steady the sheet with his arm. Third, it is never a good idea to cut in the direction of a body part. Doing so invites injury.

It was also noted that the blade may have become dull during the work day and should have been changed out. Using a fresh blade may have helped to prevent the injury.

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 and other personal protective equipment for their task? Are they using a steady work surface? 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

REV. (DATE)