



There is a story about a young boy who visited a traveling circus with a carnival sideshow. At one of the sideshow tents a barker pitched, "For a mere dollar, one of the great truths of life will be revealed!" This intrigued the boy, so he forked over his dollar and proceeded inside to learn this "Great Truth."

Inside a tent was an old man sitting on a stool under a dimly lit light bulb, whittling on a stick. The old man repeated over and over again, "Always Cut Away From You and You'll Never Cut Yourself." At this point, the young man felt betrayed and figured he had been cheated. This was the great truth?? As a matter of fact, the advice was quite valuable to him throughout his life, because he never forgot it.

Frequently we have a need to use knives and other cutting tools in our jobs, as well as at home. We cut bindings off boxes of paper. We cut seafood, meat or poultry. We open containers of all sorts. We cut ropes, cloth and various materials and adapt them to our use. But we don't always do this safely.

Watch someone use a knife sometime and notice how often they risk being injured by cutting toward their body parts. You might see individuals hold a loaf of bread near their chest and cut toward themselves when slicing off a chunk. Sometimes when cutting a rope, we bend the rope into a loop and insert the knife into the loop facing upward. When the knife is drawn up through the rope, the force of the cutting action can bring it to the face or other body parts. This is not a good idea!

An unwise but common use of box knives is to reach across the box and draw the knife toward you. This is foolish. As the old man said, "Always Cut Away From You and You'll Never Cut Yourself!"

Another great truth which the old man didn't reveal is, "A Sharp Knife is a Safer Knife!" It takes less force to cut through an object with a sharp knife. This gives you greater control of the blade. When heavy force is applied, the blade often cuts deeper than intended--sometimes into your flesh. When someone tells you their knife is so dull it wouldn't cut hot butter, don't you wonder why they are still using it?

Hand and arm protection is also available for occupations that require the use of knives. Specialty gloves protect hands and arms from cuts and punctures. Smart workers wear this protection consistently.

The bottom line is to Practice Good Knife Safety.

- Sharpen it or get rid of it!
- Use the right knife for the job.
- Wear cut-resistant gloves when appropriate.
- Always cut away from you, and you'll never cut yourself!

IMPORTANT NOTICE - The information and suggestions presented by Michigan Millers Insurance in this Safety Talks Toolkit Bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related, or other, laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter them to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.