

# Injuries resulting from DIY

DIY injuries are the fatal or non-fatal harm caused by 'activities performed by community members or unqualified tradespeople which could have been done by a professional tradesman such as a carpenter, welder or mechanic<sup>1</sup>.'

[www.iccwa.org.au](http://www.iccwa.org.au)

## Quick facts

- 75% of DIY injuries occur around the home while completing maintenance, gardening or vehicle maintenance<sup>2</sup>.
- Males are five times more likely to be involved in a DIY injury than females.
- Power tools including grinders, buffers and polishers account for one-fifth of all DIY injuries.

## Preventing DIY Injuries

When undertaking DIY activities, always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as safety glasses, gloves, steel cap shoes and earmuffs.

### Around the house:

- Use the right tools for the job, and learn how to use them correctly.
- Keep pets and children away from tools and work areas.
- Service tools and lawn mowers regularly to ensure they are in safe working condition.
- Get a professional to do the job if the task exceeds your skill level.
- Make sure there is someone else at home if you are working at a height or using potentially dangerous machinery.



### When using a ladder:

- Check the ladder for damage.
- Check warning and safety instructions, and follow them carefully.
- Before stepping onto the ladder make sure it is placed on an even surface and the lock is in place.
- Do not stand above the second step from the top on a standard ladder, or the fourth step from the top on an extension ladder.
- Always have three points of contact while on the ladder (eg. always have a hand on the side of the ladder).
- Wear secure, slip-resistant shoes with rubber soles – thongs or slippers are not appropriate<sup>3</sup>.

Bins are not ladders.

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## When using a power tool or grinder:

- Check all electrical leads for faults and frays.
- Make sure power tools are kept away from water at all times.
- Check any safety warnings or instructions before use.
- Store in a safe and secure place.
- Do not remove guards from the machine; they are there for a reason.
- Look for the Australian Standard symbol before purchasing tools<sup>4</sup>.

## While mowing the lawn:

- Ride on mowers can tip, so drive at slow speeds especially when turning.
- Before mowing the lawn, remove any rocks, branches or other potential hazards<sup>5</sup>.

## DIY Courses

For information on DIY short courses contact your local hardware store, TAFE WA or other relevant registered training organisations.

## Contacts

For product safety information or to check whether a tradesman is registered, contact the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection: 1300 30 40 54.

Injury Control Council of WA:  
08 9420 7212 or visit [www.iccwa.org.au](http://www.iccwa.org.au)

Alcohol and power tools do not mix.

## References

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2. Monash University Accident Research Centre 2009, *Do-it-yourself jobs: preventing injury*, eds Goodwin, D, Ashby, K & Bell, J, Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services, <<http://www.monash.edu.au/muarc/reports/Other/diyhome.pdf>>.
3. Home Safety Council 2009, *Ladder safety tips*, HSC, Washington, <[http://homesafetycouncil.org/SafetyGuide/sg\\_ladder\\_w001.asp](http://homesafetycouncil.org/SafetyGuide/sg_ladder_w001.asp)> .
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5. Better Health Channel 2004, *Gardening safety*, Department of Human Services, Victoria, <[http://bigdeadplace.com/frontierwatch/Gardening\\_safety.pdf](http://bigdeadplace.com/frontierwatch/Gardening_safety.pdf)>.

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ICCWA is the peak not for profit organisation involved in injury prevention and community safety promotion in Western Australia. Our mission is to reduce the incidence of injuries and their effects on the community.