

Opening Cartons Safely

General Safety Tips

- Ask your suppliers to use boxes that can be opened without using knives (such as those with perforated and pre-cut sections).
- Break plastic banding by pulling the tab provided for that purpose, rather than using a knife.
- Some packing tape can be broken with a dull opener. Use a sharp cutting tool only when necessary.
- If the carton has been stapled, remove the staples with an appropriate tool before pulling the box open.
- If the carton has been taped, use an appropriate tool (such as a box or carton cutter) to cut the tape before pulling the flaps open.
- If the carton has been glued, wear gloves while separating the glued flaps. Alternatively, use a box or carton cutter to cut along the top of the box, being careful not to damage the contents.

Select the Right Tool for the Job

- Match the size and type of cutting tool to the job at hand. Consider size, weight, blade, balance, etc.
- Whenever possible, use a self-retracting or safety knife.
- Choose a tool with the smallest possible blade. For cutting cardboard cartons, the blade does not need to be more than about a quarter inch.
- When using a tool with an adjustable blade, use the shortest blade needed to perform the cut.
- Consider ergonomically designed knives with curved handles and/or blades. These can help workers reduce wrist flexion and avoid the use of pinch grips.
- Use cutters only for their intended purposes, never as screwdrivers, pry bars, etc.

Use Cutting Tools Safely

- Hold the tool by the handle, never by the blade.
- Pay attention to the job. Never engage in horseplay when you or others are using knives.
- Cut away from, not toward, your body. Keep your fingers away from the blade.
- When using a tool with a retractable blade, pull the blade back into the handle as soon as the cut is completed. Before using the tool, be sure that the blades are operating properly.

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- Never try to catch a falling cutting tool. Let it come to rest, then pick it up.
- Do not try to cut rope, wire, or other materials with box cutters.
- Provide training for workers who use cutting tools.
Don't assume that everyone knows how to use these tools properly and safely.

For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant.

Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

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