TOOLBOX TALK
Cutting Water Mains

The Problem:

In 2014, three municipal employees were injured when their tool kicked back while they were cutting water mains. The tool cut their shoulders and face, and the workers required emergency medical treatment. This Toolbox Talk is intended to help you prevent similar work-related injuries.

What You Can Do:

- Select and use the safest tool possible.

- Follow the owner's manual for cutting equipment. Use the surface of the tool that is designed for cutting.

- Ensure that all machine guards are intact and functioning properly. Do not use damaged tools.

- To maintain leverage, avoid using cutting equipment that is raised above your shoulders or while the employee is lying down.

- When using circular blades, never use the kickback zone (upper quadrant) of the blade for cutting. If the blade is pinched or stalled in the kickback zone, the reactive force will push the power cutter up and back towards the user in a rotating motion causing serious or even fatal injury.

- Support pipes to prevent blades from being pinched.

- Protect your eyes and face with safety glasses and a faceshield.

- Train employees how to use each type of cutting tool used in their department.

Circular blades can kick-back. Use the proper cutting area and make sure machine guards are in place.

When possible, select tools that don't have potential for kick-back. This hydraulic cutter and diamond wire guillotine pipe cutter avoid kick-back forces.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR STANDARDS

For additional resources or to contact DLS, visit:
mass.gov/info-details/safetyworks-resources

TOOLBOX TALK

Toolbox Talks

A "Toolbox Talk" is an informal group discussion with employees to focus on a particular safety topic. Many employers use a monthly Toolbox Talk to remind workers of important safety tips and reinforce their safety programs.

Date: _____

Topic of Toolbox Talk: _____

Department: _____

Presented by: _____

Attendance: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Name	Signature