

AE Safety – Scissors

Hazard Description: Scissors, are commonly used during Aerospace Education (AE) hands-on activities. Human error or improper use can result in personnel injury. According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, 5,000 youth, aged five to 19 years were treated in hospitals for scissor injuries in 2006. Of this total, 2,800 (almost 60%) of the injuries are lacerations to fingers.

Prior to the activity:

- Check all scissors and only use blades that are sharp enough for the activity. Dull, chipped, or broken scissors require more force to perform the cutting operation safely, or they could slip.
- When possible, use scissors with the rounded tips.
- Ensure that there are enough safety goggles and gloves available for the activity participants, as appropriate to the activity. Gloves should be worn, in case any slipping during use occurs, when using pointed (not rounded) scissors.
- Ensure that the area where the scissors are used is well lit.

At the beginning of the activity, provide a safety briefing:

- Focus on the task at hand when using scissors. Stop using the scissors if you want to look up.
- ALWAYS cut away from the body. Ensure that others are not in the path if the scissors should slip.
- Resting the scissors against a table allows for better cutting control. It is easier to cut from right to left when you are right handed and from left to right when left handed.
- When walking with scissors, hold them closed and point down.
- When cutting, grip the scissors with all fingers that fit in the handle.
- Whenever possible, use scissors with your wrist held in a neutral position and not bent at awkward angles or positions.
- Hand scissors to someone else with the handle first.
- Do not attempt to catch a dropped pair of scissors. Let the scissors fall and then pick them up.
- Don't run or climb, always walk, when carrying scissors.
- Don't use excessive force when cutting. If the member is having trouble cutting, have a senior member replace the scissors.
- Never engage in horseplay when using scissors.
- Don't use the scissors for anything other than cutting.
- If you suffer an injury when using a pair of scissors, tell one of the senior members. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.

After the activity:

- Ensure that all scissors are returned.
- Store the scissors appropriately.
- Dispose of old scissors according to local laws and ordinances. If throwing them into the trash is allowed, secure the blades with a rubber band or other device that prevents them from opening and coming into unexpected contact.