

BOX CUTTER SAFETY

Avoid accidents and injuries by following these tips when using a box cutter.

BOX CUTTER HAZARDS

Box cutters are great tools for slicing through bulky material quickly and easily. They are also versatile because the retractable blades allow you to modify the blade length depending on the thickness of the material being cut. Potential hazards include cuts and lacerations. Choosing a safety box cutter specifically designed to reduce injuries or eliminate them altogether is the best way to stay safe.



Klever Cutter® box cutter with concealed blade

TYPES OF BOX CUTTER BLADES

Types of box cutter blades include:

- Fixed
- Manually retractable
- Auto-retractable
- Recessed or concealed blade

The safest type of box cutter has a **recessed or concealed blade**, such as the [Klever Cutter](#), which greatly reduces the risk of cuts and injuries (shown above).

Never use a razor blade alone (without a handle).

BEFORE CUTTING

- **Wear gloves.** It is a best practice to wear cut-resistant gloves when you use a box cutter. This will prevent any small nicks and cuts from minor errors.
- **Make sure the blade is sharp.** Sharp blades will cut. Dull blades will tug and pull, which is more likely to cause your hand to slip and cut your fingers. Replace when dull, and never use a broken blade!
- **Shorten the blade.** Some box cutters allow you to choose the length of the blade. Keep the blade as short as possible.
- **Position your thumb away from the blade.** It's tempting to put your thumb right by the blade when you cut for balance, but don't put your thumb anywhere near the blade.
- **Move your other hand away.** You don't need to put your other hand near the blade or cutting surface when you cut. Put your hand far enough away and back to avoid cutting it.

WHILE CUTTING

To prevent injuries while using a box cutter:

- **Angle it away from your body.** Don't cut directly towards you. If you cut at an angle, your hand will move away from your body if it slips.
- **Cut deliberately.** Apply a consistent, firm (but not excessive) pressure while performing the cut. Use your arm to move the blade in a deliberate motion so that slipping becomes unlikely.
- **Consider cutting half way.** Rather than cut all the way through the material being cut, consider cutting only halfway through, flipping the item around, and cutting the other half.

AFTER CUTTING

- If you are using a cutter with a retractable blade, **retract the blade as soon as possible.**
- When you put your box cutter away, make sure that the exposed blade is **protected with a cover**. If the blade is not available, you can't get cut!
- **Avoid touching the blade** when changing dull or damaged blades.
- **Dispose of blades in a safe manner**, such as putting them in a sharps container.



REPORT INJURIES

If an accident, incident, or near miss event occurs:

1. Complete any **immediate first aid**/medical care measures.
2. Follow the EH&S [exposure response procedures](#) if potentially exposed to hazardous materials.
3. **Report the incident** to your supervisor.
4. **Submit an [Online Accident Reporting System \(OARS\)](#) form** within 24 hours of the incident.

Notify EH&S immediately (after first aid/medical care) at 206.543.7262 if the work-related incident involves in-patient hospitalization, amputation, or fatality; recombinant/synthetic DNA/RNA exposure or spill; or radioactive material spill or exposure.

Visit the [Accident and Injury Reporting](#) webpage on the EH&S website for more information.

Contact EH&S at 206.543.7262 or ehsdept@uw.edu for more information.