[Box Cutter And Utility Knife Safety 101](https://www.safetycompany.com/safetyblog/box-cutter-and-utility-knife-safety-101/)

Box cutters and utility knives are used in a wide variety of workplace settings. From industrial factories and construction sites to offices and restaurants, nearly every professional industry uses them. The retractable, easy-to-replace blade of a box cutter or utility knife is the perfect tool for cutting through packages, zip ties, duct tape and many other materials.

Being that they use actual razors blades, however, there's always the possibility of injury when employees use a box cutter or utility knife. Unfortunately, injuries with these tools are all too common in the workplace. According to some estimates, as much as 40% of all injuries associated with manual workshop tools involve retractable blades. So, how can you reduce the risk of injury when using a box cutter or utility knife?

**How Injuries Occur:**

* Retractable blade is left in the "open" position.
* Employee attempts to cut an overly tough material and accidentally slips the blade against his or her body.
* Dull blades increase the risk of injury since workers are required to use greater force to cut through materials.
* Broken box cutters and utility knives increase the risk of injury.

**Check The Blade*Before* Use**

One of the most important steps in preventing injury associated with box cutters and utility knives is to check the blade before use. Some workers may try to get as much 'use' out of a blade as possible before replacing it. As the blade wears down, however, it becomes more full; thus, forcing the worker to exert greater pressure when cutting through an object or material. And when the worker exerts more pressure, there's a greater risk the blade will slip, cutting into his or her body.

Change the blade on your box cutter and/or utility knife on a regular basis to help reduce the risk of injury. A sharp blade is critical to its overall function and safety.

**Close The Blade *After* Use**

It's also important for workers to close the blade on their box cutter and/or utility knife after each use. Leaving the blade in the open position is an accident waiting to happen. Another worker may attempt to grab the tool -- assuming it's closed -- only to realize the blade is left exposed. Pull the blade all the way down so none of it is visible or exposed.

**Cut Away From Your Body**

The golden rule of using utility knives and box cutters is to cut away from your body, not towards it. If the blade slips while it's pointed away from your body, you won't place yourself at risk for being cut.