

## The Context

Knives (retractable, fixed blade and folding) are often considered to be a convenient and cheap tool to use for cable stripping and other electrical trade tasks.

They are inherently hazardous and are regularly involved in workplace laceration injuries. Injuries arising from the improper use of these knives range from minor cuts to severe life-threatening severing of major blood vessels.

While these tools are convenient, cheap to buy and replacement blades for retractable knives easy to change, they are very hazardous because they rely on users:

- Maintaining the tool in good working order
- Ensuring blades remain sharp
- Following correct and safe methods of use
- Applying the correct amount of force in the use of the tool

Often many or all of these controls and procedures are not fully applied. Additionally, users often do not use any form of glove protection and when they do the level of cut resistance in the glove is inadequate to protect against injury.

## Policy

The Electrical and Communications Association of Western Australia Inc., herein referred to as ECA WA Inc, acknowledge that electrician's, apprentices, students and instructors are required to strip cable and other such tasks where a knife may be considered a useful tool.

On the basis of the above and in accordance with the employee and student Codes of Conduct the policy is as follows;

- The use of all forms of knives by employees, apprentices and students is prohibited at all ECA WA campuses and facilities and by ECA WA apprentices when on assignment at host employer facilities and worksites.
- More suitable and less hazardous alternatives will be sourced and made available for training purposes at ECA WA Inc facilities and used routinely in training activities.
- ECA WA Instructors will familiarise themselves with the safer alternative and educate students and apprentices on the effective use.
- Instructors will actively supervise and enforce this policy on campus and Field Officers will monitor the use of knives during their periodic site visits.
- Employees and apprentices will be informed of this policy as part of their induction and receive ongoing instruction during their employ.
- Students will be informed of this policy as part of the enrolment process at the campus.

This policy applies to the usage of ALL knives, and where breaches of this policy are identified, the application of disciplinary measures can be expected.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and kept up to date as industry developments occur.



**Carl Copeland**

**CEO**

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