

# PHOTON SCIENCES SAFETY NOTICE

## Recent Hand Injuries

**Three APS employees have suffered serious hand injuries within the past six months.** Each employee worked for a different APS division and the cause of the injuries differed in each case. All three injuries resulted in restricted work duties and, in one case, time away from work. Fortunately, the wounds suffered by all three employees have healed properly and without complication.

**In the first instance**, an employee was using a floor-mounted abrasive cut-off wheel saw to remove bolts extending past a plate's surface when the wheel shattered. The employee's right thumb was impacted, breaking the thumbnail, splitting open the skin, and shattering the thumb's end bone. Use of a hand-held, angle-head cutting wheel tool, or making a jig to hold the plate in place would have prevented this injury.



**In the second case**, an employee was using a pneumatic crimping tool. The open end of the tool's jaws was not guarded. The injury occurred when the tip of the employee's right-hand little finger was in the wrong place at the wrong time and the tool's jaws shut on the fingertip. This resulted in the fingernail being cut through, an open cut on the bottom of the fingertip, and a chipped end bone. The injury would have been avoided had the open jaws been guarded. Unfortunately, a coworker had been "bitten" by this same tool several times and no report had been filed. A review might have identified the need for a guard, thus avoiding a serious injury.



**Finally**, an employee was using a single-edge razor blade in a holder to scrape labels off components. He was using his left hand to hold a piece of equipment in place on a work surface. The label he was scraping suddenly detached and the blade sliced across the base of his left thumb. The wound required six stitches to close. The employee was lucky in that no tendons were cut and no functionality was lost. This injury would have been avoided had the employee not positioned his left hand in line with the cutting motion or had worn cut-resistant gloves while scraping.



**An essential element to reducing the likelihood of serious injuries** is when workers and supervisors freely discuss tool hazards and controls, AND when practical safe-practice suggestions from employees are implemented. A series of meetings between group leaders and their employees will provide a forum for these types of productive interactions.