

Hello from Local 18

Brothers and Sisters, with Veterans' Day and Thanksgiving upon us let's remember to take a moment when we are enjoying time surrounded by our family and friends to reflect on the many things we have to be thankful for, whether big or small. Please let us always remember to honor our Veterans on Veterans' Day for their service and sacrifice to help make and keep our nation great. Too often, our Veterans efforts are lost in our day to day lives....

"Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as best he can, the same cause."

- Abraham Lincoln

I know it seems as if we are always discussing safety, especially in regards to our work, but how often do we take the same safety measures when we are at home? I can guarantee you that I'm not the only one who has been complacent while completing projects around the house. All it took for me was a split second and a sharp chisel to change my perspective. My story is probably a pretty familiar scenario for most of us, a Saturday evening working on projects in the garage, completing tasks we have done countless times in the past. But two errors were made on my part. PPE was in arms reach, but not being used, and absolutely horrible technique. Next thing you know I've cut my left hand wide open between my thumb and index finger. It was a bleeder to say the least but after a surprisingly quick visit to the E.R., I was patched up with orders to see an Orthopedic Surgeon. I was trying to be as positive as possible about the situation at this point, but knew something wasn't right as I couldn't move my thumb and I had lost quite a bit of feeling in the thumb and index finger. Two days later I met with the surgeon and reality sets in, I had severed my EPL tendon, severed an artery, and caused extensive nerve damage. The doctor scheduled surgery for the next day but the worst part was that there was no guarantee as to whether the injury was repairable. How stupid of me to not protect one of the most important things we need to do our job. After hearing this news many things crossed my mind, but what I worried about most was if I was going to be able to work again and whether I could possibly figure out how to work with a thumb that wasn't fully functional.

In short, after five months, two surgeries, and hundreds of hours of rehabilitation I was cleared to return to work. My thumb will never be the same, the range of motion is forever lost and the pain will always be. A valuable lesson was definitely learned and the scar on my hand is a permanent reminder to always think safety no matter if at work or home. Especially this time of year it reminds me how thankful I am for this great Union and the tremendous benefits we receive. These benefits made this awful situation one that was easier to get through as it was not necessary for me to worry about receiving top-notch medical care. But there is one thing above all else that I am truly thankful for, all the support from my IUEC Brothers and Sisters.

In solidarity,

-Puddin'

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