SCREWDRIVERS

Next to the hammer, the screwdriver is probably the most abused tool in the homeowner's or professional's tool kit. Screwdrivers are available in a wide variety of shapes, sizes, and materials. But, they are all intended for one simple use: driving and withdrawing threaded fasteners such as wood screws, machine screws, and self-tapping screws. Unfortunately, the screwdriver is misused for prying, chiseling, scraping, scoring – and only sometimes for its intended use of driving screws!

However, the most common abuse is using a screwdriver that doesn't match or fit the screw. You wouldn't wear a pair of shoes that is too small or too big for your feet – you would be abusing your feet. For the same reason you should not use a screwdriver that is too small or too big for the screw it is to drive. Use the right screwdriver and you won't chew up the screw head, damage the screwdriver or bark your knuckles.

The abuse of a screwdriver – and the screw – is most often due to the fact that the homeowner or professional simply does not have a proper assortment of screwdrivers on hand.

A screwdriver should never be used as a pry bar. If it is over-stressed in this manner, the blade might break and send a particle of steel into the operator's arm or perhaps even into his eye.

Bear these points in mind when using a screwdriver; always match the size of the screwdriver to the job and always match the type of screwdriver to the head of the screw.

FIG. 1. Typical screwdrivers

- **Stubby screwdriver for working in close quarters**
- **Screwdriver with a square shank to which a wrench can be applied to remove stubborn screws.**
- **Screwdriver for Phillips screws.**
- **Cabinet screwdriver has a thin shank to reach and drive screws in deep, counterbored holes.**

After all, you wouldn't want to drive a large No. 12 screw with a small 3/32-or 3/16-inch screwdriver and neither would you drive a Phillips screw or other recessed screw with a conventional screwdriver.

Be careful not to confuse a Phillips screwdriver with other "cross point" screwdrivers. They are not interchangeable. See Page 41 for how they differ.