



Experience you can rely on.

TOOLBOX TALK

Safe Sawing Practices

DEFINITION:

Circular saws, reciprocating saws and chain saws all have one thing in common, a sharp blade!! The following are a few ideas that will help you prevent a serious injury.

All saws, whether they are portable or stationary, need to have blades replaced regularly. Make sure the power source is disconnected before changing the blades. This is especially true for table saws that have a 240 volt power supply. The push button station triggers a relay, which in turn starts the motor. Relays have been known to go bad. Disconnect the main power source and lock it out every time you perform any maintenance on a saw, especially changing the blade.

Always use a sharp blade! Sharp blades cut better and they require less force, which avoids putting body parts in harm's way.

Avoid cutting wet timber whenever possible. Wet timber has a tendency to warp as you cut it. Pinching the blade can cause a kick back. If you have to rip wet timber with a skill saw, place a wedge in the kerf to prevent a binding situation. Use spreaders and kick back dogs when performing ripping operations with table saws, especially if the timber is damp.

Keep the guards in place!! Skill saws equipped with a proper guard during a kick back will still travel approximately 30cms backwards before the guard is closed. Never place your hands or body parts behind a skill saw in use!! Not all guards for table saws are created equal. The types that are suspended over the table are much easier to work and least likely to interfere with operations.

Keep the saw base clean and waxed. This helps to run your work through smoothly. Never use a miter gauge at the same time you are using a rip fence. The margin for error is too slim and any binding will cause a kick back.

When making a very narrow cut with a saw, put the fence on the other side of the blade. This will avoid a binding situation and give you more room to work. If you must make multiple narrow cuts, make a jig that you can push through the saw blade and use feather edges to hold work.

Wedging guards on saws is a real bad idea. Using sharp blades, ensuring the guard is working properly, adjusting the depth of cut, and securing the work are much safer methods of operation.