

Toolbox Talk # 7.10 – Safe Sawing Practices

Circular saws, reciprocating saws and band 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 well and they require less force, which avoids putting body parts in harm's way.

Avoid cutting wet wood whenever possible. Wet wood has a tendency to warp as you cut it. Pinching the blade can cause a kick back. If you have to rip wet wood with a skill saw, place a wedge in the kerf to prevent a binding situation.

Keep the guards in place. Skill saws equipped with a proper guard during a kick back will still travel approximately a foot 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 table saw tops 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 table 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 featheredges to hold work.

Wedging guards on skill 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.

Always wear eye protection when sawing.

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Project: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Company: _____

Other safety issues covered or comments from crew members:

Attendees:

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