General Safety Tips

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Ask questions if you have any doubts about doing the work safely.   **What safety procedures should you follow when using woodworking machines?**   * Always wear safety glasses or goggles * Wear dust masks when required. * Wear hearing protection that is suitable for the level and frequency of the noise you are exposed to in the woodworking area. If you have trouble hearing someone speak from three feet away, the noise level from the machine is too high. Damage to hearing may occur. * Use gloves to protect hands from splinters when handling wood but do not wear them near rotating blades and other machinery parts where the gloves can catch. * Make sure the guard is in position, is in good working condition, and guards the machine adequately before operating any equipment or machine. Check and adjust all other safety devices. * Make sure the equipment is properly grounded before use. * Check that keys and adjusting wrenches are removed from the machine before turning on the power. * Inspect stock for nails or other materials before cutting, planing, routing or carrying out similar activities. * Make sure that all machines have start and stop buttons within easy and convenient reach of an operator. Start buttons should be protected so that accidental contact will not start the machine. A collar around the button 1/8 to 1/4 inch (3 to 6 mm) above the button is recommended. * Ensure that all cutting tools and blades are clean, sharp, and in good working order so that they will cut freely, not forced. * Turn the power off and unplug the power cord (or lock out the power source) before inspecting, changing, cleaning, adjusting or repairing a blade or a machine. Also turn the power off when discussing the work. * Use a "push stick" to push material into the cutting area. Jigs are also useful in keeping hands safe during cutting procedures. Keep hands out of the line of the cutting blade. * Clamp down and secure all work pieces when drilling or milling. * Use good lighting so that the work piece, cutting blades, and machine controls can be seen clearly. Position or shade lighting sources so they do not shine in the operator's eyes or cause any glare and reflections. * Ensure that the floor space around the equipment is sufficient to enable you to machine the size of work piece being processed safely without bumping into other workers or equipment. * Woodworking machines should be fitted with efficient and well-maintained local exhaust ventilation systems to remove sawdust or chips that are produced. * Electric power cords should be above head level or in the floor in such a way that they are not tripping hazards. * Keep work area free of clutter, clean, well swept, and well lit. Spills should be cleaned up immediately. Floor areas should be level and non-slip. Good housekeeping practices and workplace design will reduce the number of injuries and accidents from slips, trips, and falls.   **What should you avoid when working with woodworking machines?**   * Do not wear loose clothing, work gloves, neckties, rings, bracelets or other jewelry that can become entangled with moving parts. * Avoid awkward operations and hand positions where a sudden slip could cause your hand to move into the cutting tool or blade. * Do not remove sawdust or cuttings from the cutting head by hand while a machine is running. Use a stick or brush when the machine has stopped moving. * Do not use compressed air to remove sawdust, turnings, etc. from machines or clothing. * Do not leave machines running unattended (unless they are designed and intended to be operated while unattended). Do not leave a machine until the power off is turned off and the machine comes to a complete stop. * Do not try to free a stalled blade before turning the power off. * Do not distract or startle an operator while he or she is using woodworking equipment. * Horse play should be prohibited. It can lead to injuries. | |

Radial Arm Saws

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Jointers and Planers

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Table Saws

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Mitre Saws

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Band Saws

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Sanders

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Shapers

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Wood Turning Lathes

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Push Sticks

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Pneumatic Nailing and Stapling Tools

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Drills

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Saws - Sabre, Jig and Reciprocating

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Belt Sanders

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Saws - Circular

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| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | http://www.ccohs.ca/images/spacer.gif | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | |  | | --- | | http://www.ccohs.ca/images/blank.gifhttp://images.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/ask_question.gif[Ask a Question](http://www.ccohs.ca/ccohs/inquiries/inquiries_form.html) | | http://www.ccohs.ca/images/blank.gifhttp://images.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/feedback.gif[Feedback](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/feedback/feedback.html) | | http://www.ccohs.ca/images/blank.gifhttp://images.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/printer_friendly.gif[Printer-friendly](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/power_tools/saw_circ.html?print) | |   [**What should you do before start cutting with a circular saw?**](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/power_tools/saw_circ.html#_1_1) [**What should you do to work safely with a circular saw?**](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/power_tools/saw_circ.html#_1_2) [**What should you avoid when cutting with a circular saw?**](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/power_tools/saw_circ.html#_1_3)   **What should you do before start cutting with a circular saw?**   * Wear safety glasses or goggles, or a face shield. * Wear an approved respirator or dust mask when exposed to harmful or nuisance dusts. * Use appropriate hearing protection equipment in noisy areas. * Check the retracting lower blade guard to make certain it works freely. * Ensure that the blade that you have selected is sharp enough to do the job. Sharp blades work better and are safer. * Check the saw for proper blade rotation. * Set the depth of the blade, while the saw is unplugged, and lock it at a depth so that the lowest tooth does not extend more than about 0.3 cm or 1/8" beneath the wood. * Keep all cords clear of cutting area. * Circular saws are designed for right-hand operation; left-handed operation will demand more care to operate safely.   **What should you do to work safely with a circular saw?**   * Check the retracting lower blade guard frequently to make certain it works freely. It should enclose the teeth as completely as possible, and cover the unused portion of the blade when cutting.   Circular Saw   * Check that the retracting lower blade guard has returned to its starting position before laying down the saw. * Keep upper and retracting lower blade guard clean and free of sawdust. * Disconnect power supply before adjusting or changing the blade. * Allow the saw to reach full power before starting to cut * Use two hands to operate saws - one on a trigger switch and the other on a front knob handle. * Keep motor free from accumulation of dust and chips. * Select the correct blade for stock being cut and allow it to cut steadily. Do not force it. * Secure stock being cut to avoid movement.   **What should you avoid when cutting with a circular saw?**   * Do not hold or force the retracting lower guard in the open position. * Do not place hand under the shoe or guard of the saw. * Do not over tighten the blade-locking nut. * Do not twist the saw to change, cut or check alignment. * Do not use a saw that vibrates or appears unsafe in any way. * Do not force the saw during cutting. * Do not cut materials without first checking for obstructions or other objects such as nails and screws. * Do not carry the saw with a finger on the trigger switch. * Do not overreach. Keep proper footing and balance. * Do not rip stock without using a wedge or guide clamped or nailed to the stock.   Do Not Over-Reach  Refer to [Powered Hand Tools - Basic Safety for Electric Tools](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/power_tools/saf_elec.html) for general safety tips. | |