



Shop Safety Best Practices

Woodworking Machines are designed to perform various woodworking operations quickly and with precision. But these power tools come without a conscience and they typically can't tell if the material being fed to them is wood or skin, flesh and bone. To do everything you can to avoid accidents, injury, or damage to these machines, the following Shop Safety Best Practices should be observed by everyone working in the shop, whether using CWA machinery and equipment, equipment belonging to our sponsoring organization (Jackson Park Ministries in the current situation) or simply being in the shop as an observer. Failure to follow these Shop Safety Best Practices could result in personal injury, possibly severe, or damage to the equipment that we all share.

Protect your eyes!

This rule isn't flexible. Upon entering shop situations and while operating power equipment, you must wear eye protection. The minimum requirement is that you wear safety glasses with side shields or goggles.

Some operations are such that it only makes sense to use a full face shield for additional protection. While turning material on the lathe, best practices indicate that a proper face shield should be worn. Depending on the type of face shield and the level of protection it provides, you may need to wear this in addition to your safety glasses or goggles for best protection. If you have any questions with regard to what the best option would be, ask the shop foreman to help you determine the best approach.

Before using a woodworking machine, start with a Risk Assessment to ensure a safe work area:

1. Hearing protection should be worn. For best protection when working with loud machines like the planer and jointer, you can wear ear plugs under a pair of ear muffs. Ideally, you'd like a level of

protection that eliminates most of the machine noise but still allows you to get some audio feedback as to how the machine is performing. Being aware of what the machine is doing, and whether it's having difficulty with the operation you're attempting to perform, adds a level of feedback that can make operation safer and warn you when you need to make adjustments to your approach to the operation.

2. If you don't know how to use the machine properly for the operation you'd like to perform, get instruction on how to use it correctly for what you want to do. The shop foreman should be able to direct you to someone who can provide this guidance.
3. Be sure that the machine is in proper working order, and that controls are functioning properly.
4. A two foot perimeter around the machine should be kept clear of people, debris and sawdust that could impair traction or footing to avoid slips and falls.
5. Most machines move their blades, bits, or abrasive surfaces with substantial rotational speed and/or power. If used improperly, they can throw the stock being milled toward the user or a bystander with tremendous force. Ensure that you and any bystanders are clear of, or protected from, this "Line of fire".
6. If you encounter any problems or issues while performing the risk assessment of the table saw and its related accessories, contact the shop foreman who will work with you to ensure that they are resolved properly.

Personal Safety is Key to a Safe Work Session

1. Never work in the shop while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or medication that impair your ability to work safely. Doing so increases the risk to yourself and to those working in the shop around you.
2. Don't work with power tools or sharp edged tools

when tired, frustrated, or angry. Working when you're in frame of mind isn't focused, clear of distraction, and free from frustration can result in accidents. Only you truly know what your day has been like. If you've had a bad day, listening to calming music is a better activity than sawing your thumb off.

3. Best Practice is to remove watches, rings, necklaces and neckties before operating the power tools. If you question the value of doing so, just think of what would happen if the table saw blade caught your watch band. Would it break free, leaving you with a minor cut, or would it pull your arm into the blade? Only you can make the best choice for your personal safety. Choose wisely.
4. Secure long hair to reduce the chance that it could become tangled in a rotating bit or moving blade.
5. Wear proper footwear. Shoes or boots with closed toes are acceptable when working in the shop. Do NOT wear flip-flops, sandals or similar types of footwear. For ultimate protection you should consider safety shoes. They provide the best protection you can wear on your feet, especially if they're also designed for working around electricity.
6. Don't wear loose clothing if it could get close to moving machine surface or blade. What is "loose"? Use good sense and if you have doubts, ask for guidance. The idea is that we work safely, not that we tell our members which items of clothing they can or cannot wear. You are responsible for your clothing choices. Choose wisely!
7. Wearing gloves can be dangerous around some machines. Gloves can become caught in the moving cutter and pull your fingers or hand into the cutting edge. These injuries aren't pretty. You must decide if you want to take the best course of action and avoid situations where a glove could potentially make a minor slip into a much more serious injury.
3. Keep your fingers, hands and other body parts at least 3" from the cutting edge or surface as a best practice.
4. Use push sticks and push blocks to maneuver work pieces once they get within 3" of the cutter or sanding belt.
5. Give the work your undivided attention.
6. Always disconnect the power before changing bits or blades or performing any other maintenance operation. As a general rule, it's worth remembering that when the machine is unplugged, you will never accidentally turn it on. If you're going to touch a cutter or abrasive belt, it only makes sense to unplug the machine first.
7. Use **blade guards** when possible.
8. Make any necessary adjustments prior to turning the machine on.
9. A general best practice is to keep bystanders clear of the area around the machine that you're working with. If an assistant is required, they can be in the area (obviously) but others should be as far away as possible to keep them out of the way and out of danger.
10. Use the outfeed tables, or use a stand to support the work if it will make the operation safer.
11. Stand comfortably, with your feet far enough apart for good balance.
12. Position your body to minimize exposure the danger areas around the machine you're working with.
13. Make sure that the blade, bit, or sanding belt has stopped moving completely before you remove scrap pieces from the table or adjust the machine for another operation.
14. Never leave a machine running unattended. Turn the power off and do not leave the machine until it comes to a complete stop.

Operational Safety Guidelines:

1. Approach your work in the shop with a safe attitude!
2. Always be aware of your position at the machine and relative to the cutting edge or surface.