



Thickness Planer Safety Rules

The Thickness planer is similar to a jointer in that it removes material from the surface of a board. It's different from the Jointer as it has the cutterhead mounted above the in/outfeed table, which is typically a single table, unlike the split tables on the jointer. The table on the planer is usually shorter and wider than the tables on a jointer. To avoid accidents, the following Risk Assessment Guidelines and Operational Safety Rules must be observed by everyone working on a CWA or JPM Planer. Failure to follow the safety rules will result in a loss of shop privileges.

Start with a Risk Assessment to ensure a safe work area:

1. Follow all procedures in **CHARLOTTE WOODWORKERS' ASSOCIATION Shop Rules and Guidelines**.
2. Safety glasses with side shields or a face shield must be worn. Everyday eyeglasses are only made of impact resistant glass, they aren't safety glasses. If you're not wearing actual safety glasses, wearing safety goggles over your regular glasses can provide the protection you need.
3. Hearing protection must be worn.
4. If you don't know how to use the Thickness Planer properly for the task you want to accomplish, get instruction on how to use it properly for what you want to do **before proceeding**.
5. Be sure that the Thickness Planer appears to be in good working order with no obvious problems or issues. If you encounter a problem, contact the Shop Foreman to get someone who can assist you.
6. Ensure that a **four (4) foot** perimeter around the Thickness Planer and the area where you'll be feeding stock in and out of the machine is clear of scrap, sawdust and everything else that might cause you or a helper to stumble, trip, or fall.
7. If a board jams in the thickness planer, turn it off and get assistance from the Shop Foreman.
8. If you are working alone, ensure that any necessary infeed and outfeed support rollers, tables, or similar are in place and leveled with the infeed or outfeed tables as needed.
9. If the stock you want to plane is too large for you to handle easily alone, get help before proceeding.
10. Remove loose fitting clothing, ties, rings, wrist watches, and other jewelry.
11. Roll back long sleeves.
12. Tie back, or otherwise secure, long hair.

Operational Safety Rules:

1. Approach your work in the shop and on the planer with a safe attitude!
2. Give the work your undivided attention.
3. Follow the 3" rule for your hands & fingers at the opening of the infeed and outfeed tables.
4. Stand to the side of the machine to avoid kickback or shattering of the wood from the planer that can occur even with feed roller pressure.
5. Place boards on the bed of the machine so your fingers do not get pinched.
6. Do not wear gloves while operating the machine.
7. Only plane clear boards or boards with solid knots to avoid kickback.
8. Boards less than 12 inches long should not be run through the Thickness Planer.
9. Always check the wood before planing for foreign material in the wood. See the **CHARLOTTE WOODWORKERS' ASSOCIATION Shop Rules and Guidelines for further guidance before milling anything other than new material.**
10. Unplug the machine to make any adjustments of the machine other than the depth of the cut and the rate of feed.
11. Depth of the cut should be set before each pass of feeding the stock into the machine.

12. If the thickness planer that you're using can feed the stock at more than one speed, then slower feed speeds will give the smoothest surface on the planed stock. You need to take a balanced approach to planning with a multi-speed feature. A faster feed rate removes material more quickly, but you need to switch to the low feed speed while sufficient thickness remains to allow proper cleanup of the rough surface left by earlier passes.
13. Keep all guards and covers on the machine when running the Thickness Planer.
14. Always connect the dust collector to the planer and use it.
15. A typical pass should remove no more than 1/16" of material for soft wood. Smaller, less powerful, machines may not be able to remove this much thickness in a pass. With less powerful machines, the width of the stock being planed also has an impact on this. Wider stock may require that less thickness be removed in a single pass.
16. When planing thin stock 3/8" or thinner, you must use a backer board.
17. Wood that is warped, cupped, twisted or bowed will cause inconsistent contact with the blades of the planer. Joint the concave surface first before running it through the planer.
18. When running short stock, always butt the ends of the boards against one another as they are fed into the planer.
19. If the board is thicker on one end than the other and jams in the machine, shut the machine off. Open the height adjustment, reverse the stock and adjust the thickness of the cut until the thick portion of the stock will feed. Most of this can be done with the machine off. You can adjust the thickness of the cut and slide the board through the planer by hand. While there is more clearance than necessary, the board will simply slide through. As soon as you reach the point where the thick section starts to catch and no longer slides through easily, remove the board, turn the Thickness Planer on again and slide the stock forward until the feed rollers pull the thick section through the planer. After that you simply close the planer's throat 1/16" per pass until the entire length of the stock is fed by the planer's feed rollers.
20. The planer is self feeding. Anytime anything thick enough to engage the feed rollers is fed into the planer while power is on, the feed rollers will drive that item through the planer and into the cutter head. This process works on stock being planed, and it will work exactly the same way if you put your arm into the planer with the machine turned on. ***Don't Do That!!!!***
21. Never leave the machine running unattended. Turn the power off and do not leave the machine until it comes to a complete stop.