



# TAILGATE SAFETY

## USING SAWS SAFELY

Saws are powerful tools that can make completing a job easier. Whether it's a circular saw, reciprocating saw, table saw, miter saw, or band saw, they all have one thing in common – a sharp blade! Injuries associated with saw usage range from nicks and cuts to amputation.

Taking just a few precautions can make using this equipment not only efficient, but also injury-free:

- Utilize personal protective equipment (such as, safety glasses, face shield, goggles, ear plugs, etc.) as determined by your supervisor.
- All saws, whether they are portable or stationary, need to have blades replaced regularly.
- Always use a sharp blade! Sharp blades cut better and they require less force, which avoids putting body parts in harms way.
- Avoid cutting wet wood whenever possible. Wet wood has a tendency to warp pinching the blade, which 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. Use spreaders and kick back dogs when performing ripping operations with table saws, especially if the wood is damp.
- 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 feather edges to hold work.
- Wedging guards on skill saws is a 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.
- Saws with hazardous defects, such as damaged guards or switches, shall be removed from service until repairs are complete.
- Band saw wheels shall be fully enclosed.
- To prevent unexpected start up, disconnect power to any saw prior to cleaning, changing blades, trying to unjam something, or servicing of any kind.
- Do not wear headphones (radio or CD player) when using a saw. Pay attention to what you are doing and stay focused.
- Do not operate any saw if you have never operated one or have limited experience. Your Supervisor will provide any necessary training.

**Training Tips:** a) Discuss near miss incidents or injuries relating to usage of saws. b) Outline your companies PPE requirements (i.e. safety glasses, earplugs, etc.). c) Outline maintenance requirements of company and employee owned equipment.



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