

Safety Note # 12

BAND SAW SAFETY



The Consumer Product Safety Commission data indicate a total of approximately 3,800 people were treated in hospitals for bandsaw injuries annually. Of this total, 83% of the injuries were to fingers, involving lacerations, amputations, fractures, or avulsions.

California regulations (Title 8, Section 4310) require: (1) band saw wheels to be fully enclosed; (2) all portions of the saw blade to be guarded except for the space (about 1/8") above the workpiece; (3) a blade tension device with indicator; (4) guards to be composed of metal, and (5) the band saw not be run at speeds in excess of the manufacturer's recommended speed.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the band saw operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the band saw for damage or disrepair. In addition, adjust the saw blade for tightness and tracking and inspect the electrical cord and plug, blade guides, and support bearings.
- If a band saw fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the band saw from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete the red tag with appropriate information.

Operating Precautions

- Always wear proper personal protection equipment when using a band saw, including the use of safety glasses or goggles, hearing protection, and a dust mask.
- Never wear gloves, a tie, loose clothing, a watch, rings, or jewelry when using a band saw. Tie long hair back or secure under a cap.
- Clear the saw table of all materials and objects before starting the band saw.
- Never start the band saw with the workpiece against the blade.
- When cutting, hold the workpiece firmly and feed it smoothly at a moderate speed.
- Keep hands and fingers at least two inches from the band saw blade.
- Never force a workpiece. If the workpiece does not feed smoothly, turn the band saw off and back the workpiece away from the jammed or uncompleted cut.
- Use a push stick when cutting small workpieces.
- Turn off the band saw and wait for the blade to stop before cleaning scrap material from the band saw table.
- Turn off the band saw and disconnect the power source prior to making saw adjustments, changing accessories, or making repairs.
- Always clean the band saw table and work area upon completion of the sawing task.