

Safety Note #68

GENERAL SHOP SAFETY



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In a study conducted by researchers at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine ⁽¹⁾, it was reported that 64 percent of surveyed amateur and professional woodworkers sustained injuries from woodshop tool use and 33 percent of the injuries required professional medical attention. Five percent of the injuries were partial amputations. Most shop injuries are avoidable and are due to employee inexperience or lack of training or improper or inattentive use of shop tools and equipment.

General Shop Safety Precautions

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in operator manuals for shop tools and equipment with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Prior to use, inspect all shop tools and equipment for damage or disrepair.
- If tools or equipment fail the pre-use inspections, notify your supervisor and remove the tools or equipment from service by attaching red tags that state "DO NOT USE." Complete red tags with appropriate information.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment for the shop task(s) to be performed, including eye, respiratory, and hearing protection.
- Do not wear loose clothing or jewelry in the vicinity of rotating or cutting tools or equipment. Tie back long hair or wear under a cap.
- Clean up shop spills promptly and place warning signs for wet or slippery walking surfaces.
- Always assure all shop tool and equipment safety guards are in place.
- Never use power tools or equipment with frayed power cords or damaged hydraulic/air hoses.
- Compressed gas cylinders shall always be securely fastened to a wall, dolly, or welding cart.
- Never touch energized shop tools or equipment that are wet or lying in water.
- Assure sufficient lighting is present in shop areas and promptly replace burned out light bulbs.
- Never reach behind, over, or under a drill, grinder, or saw unless the bit, wheel, or blade has stopped turning and the power has been disconnected.
- Turn off shop tools or equipment and disconnect power sources prior to cleaning or performing repairs, service, and adjustments.
- Store flammable liquids, such as gasoline and solvents, in approved safety cans/cabinets.
- Always practice good housekeeping in the shop. Clean the work area upon completion of the shop task.

⁽¹⁾ *Tool-Related Injuries Among Amateur and Professional Woodworkers, Becker, T.M., Trinkaus, K.M., Buckley, D.I., 1996: Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 38(10), 1032-1035.*