



#94 BAND SAW SAFETY



According to U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission data, approximately 3,900 people received hospital treatment for band saw injuries during 2009. Most injuries involved lacerations to fingers. Other injuries included finger fractures and hand lacerations. Most of these band saw injuries were due to operator error or inattention and could have been avoided.

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, assure the blade teeth are pointing down and saw blade is undamaged, sharp, and properly secured and tensioned. Inspect the electrical cord and plug for defects.
- If the band saw fails your inspection, inform your group leader, parent, or guardian and remove it from use until it can be repaired.

Operating Precautions

- Always wear a face shield or safety glasses when using a band saw. As appropriate, wear a dust mask and/or suitable hearing protection.
- 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.
- Always use the correct saw blade for the cutting task. Use a wide blade for straight cuts and narrow blade for curving cuts.
- Wheel guards must be closed before turning the band saw on.
- Adjust the upper guide assembly to be no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch above the wood to be cut.
- Hold wood stock flat on the table.
- Allow the band saw to operate at full speed before beginning to cut.
- Keep your fingers at least two inches from the side of the saw blade. Never place your fingers in front of the saw blade.
- Feed wood stock into the saw blade firmly at a steady rate that will not overheat the saw.
- Avoid twisting or binding the saw blade when making curved cuts.
- Plan band saw procedures to make forward cuts with few backing out cuts.
- Always turn the power source off and wait for the saw to stop before adjusting the band saw, backing the saw blade out of a long cut, or clearing away wood scraps from the table.
- Use a stick of brush to clear away wood scraps from the saw blade. Never use your fingers.
- Step away immediately if the saw blade breaks or comes loose. Turn off the power without endangering yourself.
- If you are injured by a band saw, notify your project leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.

Note: Clover Safe #94 was developed from information provided by Richard Mahacek, County Director and 4-H Advisor, Merced County Cooperative Extension.