

TABLESAW SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. Do Not use the tablesaw if you are too tired, hungry, sad, mad, or dehydrated. Never work while under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or any medication that creates drowsiness or impaired thinking.
2. Never use the tablesaw until you have been trained on and understand the safety issues and procedures specific to use of the tablesaw. Obtain advice from your instructor or woodshop manager if you are not thoroughly familiar with the operation of the tablesaw.
3. Plan ahead; think of the sequence of cuts that need to be made. Think about where your hands are going to be before, during, and after the operation.
4. Pay attention to your "gut feeling" or that "little voice in the back of your head", if something doesn't feel right or if an operation feels dangerous then it probably is, so STOP and think it through and/or talk with your instructor or woodshop manager. There is probably a safer way to do the operation.
5. Always wear eye and ear protection when using the tablesaw. Wearing a dust mask is always a good idea.
6. Do not wear loose clothing or gloves. Remove watch, all jewelry and tie back long hair or beards.
7. Like all machines you must give the tablesaw your undivided attention during use. Once you have begun making a cut you must keep your complete focus on that operation until the cut is complete. Do not look up at activity that may be happening around you or engage in conversation while making a cut.

8. Check that the tablesaw is in working condition. Get into the habit of doing a "pre-flight" checking procedure. Keep in mind that you do not know who or for what the saw was used prior to your arrival at the saw. The following should be checked before use:
 - a. Is the correct blade on for the cut you need to make? Is it clean and are the teeth are in good condition? Is the blade on correctly? Is the blade on securely with the nut and washer in place? Remove the insert to check that the nut and washer is tightened.
 - b. Is the correct insert on for the blade(s) that you are using? Is the insert flush with the tabletop? Make sure that the teeth of the blade are not in contact with insert.
 - c. Is the blade set at the correct angle and height? For rip cuts with the *Freud* blade, three teeth should be above the surface of the wood. For crosscuts with the *Freud* blade, five teeth should be above the surface of the wood. Different manufacturers have different recommendations.
 - d. Is the tablesaw surface clear and clean of everything except for the wood you will be cutting?
 - e. Do you have a clear unobstructed path behind and in front of you to push the wood through the blade and to clear the blade at the end of the cut?
 - f. Is the fence in position and locked?
 - g. Use the splitter whenever possible; check that it is securely in place.
9. Know the condition of your wood before any cuts are made.
 - a. Wood should be free of metal, staples, or nails.
 - b. Loose knots, splits, cupped, twisted warped wood should be avoided. Consider using the bandsaw to make preliminary rough cuts on

rough, warped wood.

- c. The wood should be flat on one face with a straight edge to bear against the fence.
10. Avoid kickback!!!! A kickback occurs when a piece of wood is forced back towards the operator at a high rate of speed. There are several classic ways that a kickback can occur. The wood gets trapped or pinched between the blade and a stationary object like the fence. Or the saw kerf closes up around the saw blade as the wood releases internal tension. Or the wood comes away from the fence and climbs up on the back of the saw blade.

Avoid kickbacks by:

- Using the correct blade for the operation and keeping-the blade sharp and free of pitch
- Avoiding use of wood' that has loose knots, and is twisted and warped
- Having wood that has a flat face to the tabletop and a straight edge that that will bear against the fence
- Using a splitter which will keep the kerf open and not allow the kerf to pinch on the back of the blade
- Using feather boards to aid in holding the wood against the fence and table during the operation
- Keeping the fence parallel to the blade, making sure the fence is in the Jocked position prior to the cut
- Pushing the wood completely past the back of the saw blade prior to release. Never release control of the wood while it is still touching the fence and the blade. **YOU MUST BE IN CONTROL OF THE WOOD THAT IS BETWEEN THE FENCE AND THE BLADE.**

- Avoid using the fence and miter gauge in tandem when crosscutting

- Avoiding wedge shaped pieces of waste that can drop down between the blade and insert causing the blade to be pinched which would then pinch the wood between the blade and the fence

- Never sawing a board or sheet goods larger than what you can control. Use roller stands or an assistant to help you or cut it smaller first by another method before coming to the tablesaw.

When a kickback happens it is at lightning speed and you have NO time to react. The danger is that you may be hit by with great force by the wood and/or that your hand may be pulled into the blade as the wood is kicking back towards you.

11. Position yourself. Stand to the left side of the blade to avoid being hit by a kickback and for better control of the wood past the blade. Be sure to have firm footing and balance when making the cuts.
12. You MUST use a push stick when cutting narrow widths (generally under 10 inches). A push stick will keep you in control of the wood while keeping your hand a safer distance away from the blade.
13. Never have any part of your body in line with the path of the saw blade.
14. Never reach around or over the saw blade.
15. Before reaching for anything in the vicinity of the saw blade, shut off the saw and let it come to a complete stop. Keep the area around the blade and outfeed table free of scraps.
16. NEVER attempt freehand cuts on the tablesaw. The wood must always be held firmly down and against either the rip fence, miter gauge fence or other backup device like a crosscut sled.
17. The minimum length for ripping wood is: the wood must be longer than the length of the blade exposed above the table. Avoid working with short pieces of wood whenever possible. Plan ahead and don't cut your boards

too short too soon. A minimum length of 12" is a good standard to use.

18. Consult with your instructor or woodshop studio manager on the minimum length when crosscutting as it depends on the fence or device used to hold the wood.
19. Turn the saw off at its power source before installing or removing blades or accessories, before adjusting and changing set-ups, or clearing debris from within the machine. Inform your instructor or studio manager that the blade needs changing.
20. Never make any adjustments to the saw when it is on, including fence adjustments.
21. Feed the wood at a controlled steady rate. Stopping and feeding too slowly when cutting can make it difficult to maintain control, can cause the blade to overheat, and make for a poorer quality cut.
22. Do not back out of a cut. If a problem arises, hit the off switch with your body/leg and keep holding the wood until the machine has come to a complete stop. Remain in control of the wood between the blade and fence.
23. Please realize there are no shortcuts in woodworking. When beginning work on the tablesaw, mentally prepare yourself for a pace of work that is slower, more deliberate, and safety conscious. Accept the fact that everything will take longer than you think. Always err on the side of caution.

Familiarity with the tablesaw breeds confidence and competence so practice often and ask questions and get help as you need it.