Working Safely with Table Saws

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When using a table saw, some thought and effort must go into making sure it is set up and used safely. Here is an overview of a few recommended steps we should take to help us avoid some of the hazards commonly associated with table saws.

- Always inspect your table saw before first use each day, as well as any time it has been relocated or re-installed in a different place. Make certain it is set up relatively level and does not vibrate and move around during use. Also make certain that there are no people working in areas located behind the saw that could be struck by flying particles or debris.

- Make certain the saw blade is the proper size and speed rating for the brand and model of table saw you are using, and that it is suitable for the type of cut you will be making. Also make sure the saw blade is firmly secured in place, and that there are no broken teeth, bent or broke sections, or other damage.

- Adjust the table height so that the saw blade extends above table level only high enough to make the cut in the wood.

- Make certain the guards provided with the table saw are installed and functioning properly. These include the self-adjusting guard that covers the top portion of the saw blade located above the table surface, as well as the fixed guarding that prevents accidental contact with the lower portion of the saw blade.

- Before cutting, inspect wood for knots, nails, staples, or other items that could create a hazard if they contact the saw blade. Avoid making cuts that strike these objects.

- Never place any part of your hand directly in line with the saw blade when pushing wood through the saw; instead, make sure your hands stay to the sides of the blade to avoid injury in case your hand slips or you push too far. And always utilize a push stick, where necessary, to feed the wood to prevent your hands from getting too close to the blade

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