Working Safely with Portable Circular Saws

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Many of the injuries suffered by users of hand-held circular saws don’t require just a Band-Aid; they often require stitches, surgery, or sometimes months of physical therapy to help the victim recover the ability to use their hand. So here are a few tips to remember every time you pick up a portable circular saw:

- Inspect the power cord of your saw before use to insure there are no breaks or cuts in the jacket, and that the plug is not damaged. Also make certain to position the cord so it does not get near the turning blade or get damaged by falling material. Immediately turn in equipment found with defects so the cord can be replaced by an authorized person.

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

- ALWAYS maintain in place the manufacturer’s guards on your saw. Removing, altering, or wedging the guard in the open position can expose portions of the turning blade. And take the time to adjust the base plate so that the amount of blade protruding below the material being cut is minimized.

- Wear all required personal protective equipment such as approved safety glasses, or goggles to protect your eyes and hearing protection when operating a saw.

- Always secure the material you are cutting to a stable surface with clamps, where applicable, so that it does not move around as you are operating the saw. If the material being cut moves or drops, it can pinch the blade and cause it to jam, break, or suffer other damage; it can also cause the saw to kick-back and make contact with you.

- Make sure to hold the saw with two hands when operating; this helps you control the saw and helps keep your fingers away from the moving portion of the blade that extends below the material being cut. Also, allow the saw blade to come to a complete stop before you withdraw the saw from the material being cut.

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