

SafetyTalk

Struck-by injuries – Electric saws

Explain dangers

Electric saws such as table saws, chainsaws, and circular saws are some of the most widely used power tools on construction sites. They're also among the most dangerous. Hundreds of Ontario workers are hospitalized each year after being struck by a power saw or the material they were cutting with it.

Common struck-by injuries from electric saws include cuts and lacerations, amputations, fractures, and eye injuries from flying debris.

Identify controls

- Read all the safety materials and follow the manufacturer's instructions when using electric saws. Make sure copies are available for reference on the jobsite.
- Wear all required personal protective equipment when operating electric saws. That includes safety glasses, hearing protection, a dust mask (if needed), and appropriate footwear.
- The blade of the saw should only extend 1/8 inch below the piece of material that you are cutting. The risk of a struck-by injury from kickback increases as more of the blade is exposed below the material.
- Never use your knees or foot to support the material you're cutting.
- Never pull the saw backward when you're cutting.
- Keep your hand away from the front of the saw.
- Never reach under, around, or behind the material you're cutting while the saw blade is moving.
- Never carry a saw with your finger on the trigger.
- Ensure blades and tools are inspected prior to use.
- Ensure all guards are in place and that they have not been tampered with.
- Never put the saw down until the blade/chain and motor has stopped.
- Position yourself so that you are in control of the saw.
- Never wedge, wire, or jam the guard to prevent it from working.
- Only competent workers should use an electric saw.

Demonstrate

- Demonstrate how to use an electric saw using the specific model you are using on the jobsite. Give workers an opportunity to handle the tool and provide feedback.
- Demonstrate how to properly hold lumber or material being cut and discuss awkward working positions.
- Show workers where to find the manufacturer's instructions. Encourage workers to report injuries and close calls.

