

Electric tools—Sabre saws

Explain dangers

Sabre saws (a.k.a. portable jigsaws) are used to cut holes in ceilings, floors, and walls and to make short, straight cuts. The sabre saw cuts on the upstroke only.

A reciprocating saw is a heavier type of sabre saw with a larger and more rugged blade. It must be held with both hands to absorb vibration and to avoid accidental contact.

Be aware of the following hazards when using a sabre saw:

- If you do not use a sabre saw correctly, it can kick back, injuring you and damaging materials.
- If you do not check out what is behind your work, you could also saw into wires, cables, or pipes.
- Do not use this saw for continuous or heavy cutting. Use a circular saw.

Identify controls

- Wear eye protection. You should wear safety glasses with side shields. Even better are goggles for dust or a face shield.
- Use two hands on the saw to maintain control, absorb vibration, and avoid accidental contact.
- Always make sure you know what is on the other side of the surface being cut. Beware of sawing into wires, cables, and pipes.
- Make sure that the saw will clear the bench, trestle, or other support.
- Use clamping material. It is not only safe but also reduces vibration and makes cutting more accurate.
- Do not start cutting if the blade is in contact with the work. Let the saw reach full power before it touches the work.
- Hold the base or shoe of the saw in firm contact with the work. This keeps the blade cutting straight up and down and prevents it from twisting or breaking.
- Keep your free hand away from the front of the saw.

- Never reach under, around, or behind the material being cut.
- Do not try to make inside or pocket cuts without first drilling a lead hole.
- Remember that, when the motor is running, working a blade in or out of a cut or lead hole can cause kickback.
- Let the saw and the blade do most of the work. Do not force the saw. The machine should turn with ease. If you have to push the saw, the blade is too dull or the stock is too heavy for the saw.
- Never put the saw down until the blade and motor have stopped.

Demonstrate

Have a sample saw available to demonstrate while you talk. Inspect sabre saws used on the job (see images below).

Review situations in which this type of saw should or should not be used. Demonstrate external and inside cuts.

