Hand-held masonry saws

**Explain dangers**

Hand-held masonry saws, commonly known as “quick-cut saws”, are widely used for cutting concrete, masonry materials, and steel. These high-powered tools can cause serious injuries, so take great care when working with them.

- The blade of the saw operates at high speeds. Kickback can occur if the blade becomes wedged and the force sends the rotating blade back towards the operator.
- The saw is extremely loud and produces a lot of vibration.
- Gasoline-powered saws release carbon monoxide (CO). In addition, spilled or leaking fuel combined with the sparks produced during cutting can cause a fire.
- Cutting concrete and masonry materials can expose the operator to toxic dusts (e.g., silica), which can cause respiratory problems. It also produces flying particles that can strike the eye.
- When cutting metal, the sparks produced can cause a fire and the metal filings can become airborne and strike someone.
- A saw that is left idling may bounce around or fall, causing injury or damage.

**Identify controls**

**INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE**

- Always keep a copy of the owner’s manual on hand and follow the manufacturer’s instructions for servicing and maintenance.
- Clean and change the air filter frequently to remove dust buildup.
- Inspect the saw and its components for damage before using it. Replace any worn, cracked, or broken parts before the saw is used again.
- Never remove or alter any safety features of the saw such as the protective guard or the throttle trigger interlock.
- Make sure that the machine is well lubricated.
- Ensure that the blade is mounted properly and is facing the correct direction for rotation. The blade should be snug and in good condition.
- Use only the blades and disks that are compatible with your saw (e.g., maximum rpm rating and diameter).
- Ensure that the appropriate blade is used for the material being cut. (i.e., Never use a masonry blade to cut wood.)

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**

- Always wear PPE in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and legislated requirements.
- Wear eye protection that is CSA- or ANSI-approved. A face shield may be required as well.
- When wet cutting, wear a NIOSH-approved dust mask. Remember: Wet cutting is the preferred method.
- When dry cutting, wear a NIOSH-approved respirator.
- Use gloves, a hard hat, CSA-approved safety boots, and earplugs or earmuffs.
- Never wear loose clothing, chains, jewelry, etc.
- Fire-resistant clothing should be worn.

**Demonstrate**

With your crew, review the maintenance procedures in the operating manual for the specific saw you will be using. Show them what to look for during an inspection.