

Hand-held masonry saws 2

Explain dangers

Hand-held masonry saws are high-powered tools that can cause serious injuries.

- 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

STARTING THE SAW

- Keep others at least six feet away from you. Place the saw on solid ground and secure it with one foot in the rear handle.
- Grasp the top handle with one hand and set the throttle lock. Pull the recoil handle towards your chest.
- Never “drop start” or “throw start” a saw. This leaves only one hand to control it.
- Don’t let the pull cord snap back.

OPERATING THE SAW

- Before operating the saw, complete a hazard assessment of the work area and locate buried cables or covered electrical services so they can be avoided.
- Hold the saw firmly with both hands and plant your feet firmly in a wide stance before starting to cut.

- Stand to the left of the saw and hold your left arm straight. Activate the throttle with your right hand. (Reverse for left-handed saws.)
- To prevent kickback, never let the upper quarter of the blade contact the material. Do not cut above waist height and cut only one item at a time.
- Let the abrasive edges of the blade and power of the engine to do the cutting. Don't force it.
- Bring the saw to full speed before starting the cut. If you feel resistance, the blade may not be compatible with the material. If it's a diamond blade, it may be glazed over. Using the wrong blade is not only a safety hazard but also increases your risk of developing hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS).
- Never use a saw or blade that is damaged.
- Secure and support the material you are cutting to prevent it from bending or pinching. Support heavy materials on both sides so it doesn't fall.
- Maintain a safe work zone when operating the saw. If the blade breaks, pieces may break off and strike the operator or others nearby.
- Take precautions to prevent exposure to toxic exhaust fumes and the buildup of CO gas.
- Before refueling saw, shut off the engine and allow it to cool. Do not smoke while handling fuel. Make sure gas caps are tight before restarting.
- An abrasive blade is meant for cutting, not for grinding or feathering.

TRANSPORTING THE SAW

- Shut off the motor before setting the saw down. Allow it to cool off.
- During transit, make sure the saw is secured to prevent it from moving. Never put it in the passenger's seat of a vehicle.
- Where possible, transport the saw in a well-vented cabinet or in the open air.

Demonstrate

Show your workers the proper way to start and operate a hand-held masonry saw.