

Hand-held masonry saws 1

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.

