

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Clover Safe notes are intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and members nine years and older

#95 SCROLL SAW SAFETY



Drawing Courtesy of Federal OSHA

Scroll saws are not considered as dangerous as other types of power saws, such as band saws or table saws. However, scroll saw users should keep in mind that during 2009 power saws were involved in more than 35,000 injuries (U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission data) where people received hospital treatment.

Most scroll saw injuries are lacerations to the fingers and hands resulting from contact with the moving saw blade. By following the precautions given in this Clover Safe note, users should be prepared to prevent inadvertent scroll saw injuries.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the scroll saw operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the scroll saw for damage or disrepair. In addition, assure the blade teeth are pointing down and saw blade is undamaged, sharp, and properly secured in a vertical position. Inspect the electrical cord and plug for defects.
- If the scroll saw fails your inspection, inform your group leader, parent, or guardian and remove it from use until it can be repaired.

Operating Precautions

- Always wear a face shield or safety glasses when using a band saw. As appropriate, wear a dust mask and/or suitable hearing protection.
- Never wear gloves, a tie, loose clothing, a watch, rings, or jewelry when using a scroll saw. Tie long hair back or secure under a cap.
- Prior to starting, assure the blade guard is in place and belt guard is closed and tight.
- Always use the correct saw blade for the cutting task. Use a narrow blade for curving cuts.
- Adjust the hold-down to the thickness of the wood to be cut. Only cut wood with a flat bottom surface.
- Select the correct machine speed for the type of scroll sawing task to be performed.
- Keep your fingers to the side of the saw blade. Never allow your fingers to be in front of the saw blade.
- Your fingers must be positioned more than two inches from the blade when the saw is operating.
- When cutting cylindrical (round) stock, secure stock in a "V" fixture.
- Always turn the power source off and wait for the saw to stop before making scroll saw adjustments.
- Use a stick of brush to clear away wood scraps from the saw blade. Never use your fingers.
- Step away immediately if the saw blade breaks or comes loose. Turn off the power without endangering yourself.
- If you are injured by a scroll saw, notify your project leader, parent, or guardian. Seek medical attention if the injury is serious.

Note: Clover Safe #95 was developed from information provided by Richard Mahacek, County Director and 4-H Advisor, Merced County Cooperative Extension.