General Guide for using Wood Working Machines

Before using any machine, you need to be certain of the following:

1. That you are ready and able to work safely,
2. That the machine is set-up properly and is in safe working condition, and
3. That the material you plan to use is appropriate.

1. Make Certain You Are Able To Work Safely

- Tie up long hair.
- Tie up or remove loose clothing.
- Remove watches and jewellery from wrists and fingers.
- Consider your physical condition and mood—do you feel well enough to use the machine safely?
- Wear eye and or face protection.
- Wear a dust mask and or hearing protection if necessary.

2. Make Certain That The Machine Is set-up Properly And is In Safe Working Condition

- Check that the machine in not running as you approach it.
- Check that all guards and covers are in place and are in good working condition.
- Check guides to see they are set correctly.
- Check to see that the proper speed has been selected.
- Clear the area around the machine to avoid trip hazards.
- Switch on the dust collector if necessary.
- Make sure the power cord is not up against the cutter or wrapped around a moving part.
- Make sure the proper blade, sandpaper, stone or cutter is installed, that it is installed properly and that it appears to be in good condition.
- Start machine and check to see that, when running, everything looks and sounds "normal."

3. Make Certain That The Material You Plan To Use Is Appropriate

- The material you are using should be wood.
- The material should be clean and free of paint, dirt, grease, sand, nails, screws and other metal objects.
- If the material is large and or heavy, you may need help to support the work.

Band Saw Guide

- Use extra caution in the following situations:

  1. When cutting irregular shaped stock, especially when your work is not supported by the table at the point where the blade passes through the table.
     Possible solutions: Try to plan your cuts so that each cut is well supported by the table at the cutting point. Attach to your work piece (with nails, screws, glue or tape) a support block or cradle (made from a recent off-cut) for additional support.

  2. When cutting into a cylinder (like a disk, a dowel or a branch). This can be hazardous because the blade will want to roll the work, possibly snapping it out of your hands.
     Possible solutions: Hold the work firmly against rolling, or attach the work to something (a jig) which prevents rolling, or use a hand saw instead.

  3. When using a dull blade. This means you have to push harder, which can increase the possibility of a blade breaking, or your work may jump forward unexpectedly as the blade breaks through at the end of a cut.
     Possible solutions: Have the blade changed for a sharp one if possible. Ask an instructor, technician, class assistant or monitor to change it for you. As a blade gets dull, it can't cut as fast. Slow down, don't push too hard, especially at the end of the cut, or when the blade is close to an edge of the work.

- Don't force blade to cut a radius tighter than the blade was meant to cut. Narrow blades cut tight radii. Wide blades are better for cutting straight lines and for cutting curves with larger radii.

- Have the blade changed for the one that best suits what you are cutting. Blades with large teeth cut fast but leave a rough surface. Blades with small teeth cut slow but leave a smooth surface.

- When a blade breaks or comes off the tires, don't touch it until you are **certain** that both upper and lower wheels have come to a complete stop.

- Avoid backing up. When you do back-up, go slowly and use extra caution.

- Avoid awkward and dangerous hand positions where your hand is near, or in line with the cut.

- Never push the work through with your fingers close to the blade exit point. Use a push stick or pull the work through from the far side.

- Don't use your fingers to remove small scraps from near a moving blade.

- Don't leave the machine running while it is unattended.

- Pay attention to what you are doing. Do not engage in conversation while using the saw.