

## Power Saw Safety at Home

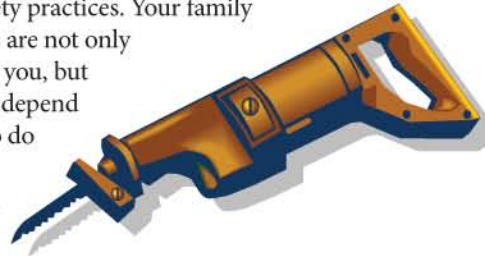
Take your knowledge from work home with you every day. Just like you keep your tools in good condition at work, do the same at home.

Whatever home project you're working on, maintain your power saws in good condition. Change the blades as needed—don't "leave it in there for just a while longer" because it's only a home tool. Replace it and avoid an injury. Follow the owner's manual specifications.

Your family needs to know about proper maintenance of tools. Show them why they should not use an old or cracked blade. Tell them about the potential 'kickback' and flying debris. Make sure you have a push stick, guards, proper safety goggles, and other protective equipment in your home—and then use it!

Teach your family the safety basics of operating power saws. Do not let them use a saw unless you are absolutely sure they can handle it. Play it safe—be there to help and "show the safe way."

Be sure you have a tool with enough power for the job you are doing. Your work tools may be more powerful than you need. At home, go slowly and carefully. Take the time required to enjoy your work while following good safety practices. Your family members are not only watching you, but they also depend on you to do the job right and set an example.



For more information, refer to current applicable Occupational Health and Safety Legislation.



**The Alberta Construction Safety Association's** mission is to provide quality advice and education for the construction industry that will reduce human suffering and financial costs associated with workplace incidents. This brochure is part of a series, *The Toolbox Brochures*, which are available on a variety of safety topics. If you have any questions or comments please contact:



**Edmonton** Tel: 780-453-3311  
Toll Free Line: 1-800-661-2272  
Fax: 780-455-1120  
Toll Free Fax: 1-877-441-0440  
E-mail: [edmonton@acsa-safety.org](mailto:edmonton@acsa-safety.org)

**Calgary** Tel: 403-291-3710  
Toll Free Line: 1-800-661-6090  
Fax: 403-250-2852  
Toll Free Fax: 1-877-258-5881  
E-mail: [calgary@acsa-safety.org](mailto:calgary@acsa-safety.org)

**Fort McMurray**  
Tel: 780-715-2157  
Fax: 780-715-1684  
[fortmcmurray@acsa-safety.org](mailto:fortmcmurray@acsa-safety.org)

[www.acsa-safety.org](http://www.acsa-safety.org)

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# Power Saws



## Making Safety A Way Of Life



# The Alberta Construction Safety Association



## Team Safety

Both you and the company must work together to ensure power saws are used properly. Too often, a worker will lose a finger in an incident that could have been prevented. Was the worker taking a shortcut by removing the guard? Was the equipment well maintained? By working with the company, incidents and lost time injuries can be avoided while efficiency and morale can be improved.

## Common Safety

Different power saws have different specifications. Learn about your saw(s) and follow the manufacturer's instructions. When you operate a saw, you will need to follow several basic safety steps. Use your knowledge of safety in this area as a basis for good safety everywhere.

Communicate with new and experienced workers—share safety tips with each other. Your “team” player attitude will ensure that all power saws are used properly. With a good attitude, a clean work area, and equipment that is working right, you will reduce the chance of having an incident or injury.

## Danger Signs

Tragic incidents can occur when using power saws. Common injuries include:

- Amputation of fingers.
- Eye injuries from debris or fragments.
- Cuts, scrapes, or wounds by flying material.
- Hearing damage.
- Electrocution or electric shock.

The best way to avoid a minor or major injury is to follow appropriate safety procedures.

## Safety with Saws

Are you trained in the use of the saw? Circular, saber, jig, and reciprocating power saws each have different operations to be aware of. Use the right saw for the right job. If you don't know what you're doing—ask!

Questions to ask before using a saw:

- Has the saw been tested and inspected recently?
- Is the blade clean, sharp, or recently replaced?
- Is the motor clean?
- Are power cords out of the way?
- Is the work area free of tripping hazards?

## Safety Reminders

Sometimes the most basic safety rules are ignored or forgotten:

- Follow manufacturer's specifications
- Always wear safety glasses or a face shield.
- Use adequate hearing protection.
- Use respiratory protection when needed.
- Wear proper clothing or coveralls.
- Do not force the blade.
- Use the right blade for the job.
- Unplug or lockout the saw before making adjustments or changing the blade.
- Secure your materials to prevent movement.
- Make sure the material you are cutting is free of nails or screws.



## The Hand-Held Circular Saw

- Make sure the retracting lower blade guard is unobstructed.
- Be sure the retracting lower blade guard is fully returned before laying the saw down.
- Never hold or fix the lower guard in the open position.
- Do not over tighten the blade-locking nut.
- Keep hands away from the cutting area—never place them under the shoe, guard, or material being cut.
- Check that adjusting keys and wrenches are removed before turning the saw on.
- Turn the saw off and unplug it from power before carrying it.
- Do not set the saw down unless the guard is in place or the blade rotation has stopped.

## Other Saws

Reciprocating power saws with jigsaw or bayonet blades are hard to guard—so be very careful. Ensure that the blade is moving at full speed before you start the cut.

To prevent a blade from binding, make sure to support the materials being cut—especially when cutting a curve or near the end of a cut. This will keep the blade from binding. Wear your goggles, and try to stay clear of the path a broken blade might take.

Only qualified operators should use radial arm or table saws. At the end of a cut, scrap can be propelled back toward the operator if the anti-kickback pawls do not work.