

TOOL BOX TALKS

Cut-off Saw Safety

Cutoff saws can also be referred to as “quickie saws.” Cutoff saws are used for a variety of reasons in the construction trade, namely cutting steel rebar or concrete. Cutoff saws use a round cutting wheel/blade that can be metal for concrete and that travel at extremely high speeds. The blade of the saw is an extremely dangerous object due to its rotating speed and unguarded cutting surface. Cutoff saws can be powered electrically, with gas engines or hydraulically or with compressed air. Below are safety tips for cutoff saw users:

WORKSAFE TIPS

TRAINING REQUIRED

- Always train cutoff saw operators
- Review the owner’s manual during training
- They present different hazards than chain saws
- A tool with the capability to cut steel or concrete can most definitely injure an operator

HAZARDS

Cutoff saws expose users to the following hazards:

- Noise from engine and cutting action
- Vibration transmitted through handles
- Dust that contains silica from cutting concrete
- Flying objects as saw makes the cut
- Cutting disc explosion due to high RPM
- Pinch points from unguarded drive belt

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Eye protection - flying wastes/disc fragments
- Hearing protection due to extreme noise
- Dust filtering mask when exposed to dusts
- Protective footwear in case tool is dropped
- Gloves for flying objects and vibration

PRE-USE INSPECTION

- Blade not cracked, chipped or warped
- Blade is not excessively worn
- Saw is fueled when cold
- Belt and blade guards are present and adjusted
- Wear Personal Protective Equipment

BEST PRACTICES

- Limit persons or bystanders in the area a cut-off saw is being used.
- Use the saw only for its intended application.
- Match saw discs to the material being sawed.
- Leave guards on saws always.
- Maintain guards in good condition.
- Adjust guards with the saw OFF.
- Adjust the guard before cutting.
- Use wet methods when cutting concrete.
- Concrete dust cutting exposes the operator to silica, a potentially cancer causing dust.
- Wear correct respiratory protection when wet cutting methods aren’t possible – silica hazard!
- Match saw RPM with blade RPM – Never use blades with RPM limits LOWER than saw maximum RPM .
- Follow direction of travel when mounting a cutting wheel.
- Remove cutting wheels when transporting a saw – transportation movement can damage a blade.
- Mount cutting discs with the correct tools
- Inspect blades for cracks, warping, overheating or excessive wear BEFORE USE.
- Fuel gasoline-powered saws only when the saw has cooled.
- Use a funnel and safety gasoline can when fueling cutoff saws.
- Start saw properly, on the ground – never “jerk start” cutoff saws.
- Don’t set saw down until the blade has stopped!
- Never “hand off” a saw with the blade rotating!

