Basic safety principles

Although this guide addresses point-of-operation safeguarding for specific machinery, it is also important to establish and enforce safe work practices when operating and maintaining all types of equipment and machinery.

The following list includes basic rules that apply to portable and fixed machinery:

**Equipment** ("parts" include blades, bits, sanding belts, dies, grinding stones)

- Follow the equipment manufacturer’s recommendations
- Use equipment only for the purpose for which its design is intended
- Operate the tool at the speed and tension specified by the manufacturer
- Inspect the equipment visually before use
- Remove unadjusted, defective, cracked, or worn parts from service
- Maintain sharp and clean parts
- When provided, use equipment with an exhaust or dust-collection system
- Use the appropriate size and type of part for the material and cutting action
- Check to see that guards, guides, and counterweights are properly adjusted and operable
- Avoid overheating the equipment

**Work practices**

- Use only tools you can control easily
- Make sure hands are kept at a safe distance
- Follow safe procedures as outlined in the operator’s manual
- Always wear eye and face protection and other appropriate personal protective equipment
- Do not wear loose clothing or long hair
- Check to see that power cords are kept away from the line of cut and other moving parts
- Follow proper lockout/tagout procedures during service and repair
- Never defeat the guard to expose the blade
- Never reach under the saw, work piece, or any place you can’t see clearly
- Direct the operation away from your body

**Work environment**

- Practice good housekeeping — avoid crowded, cluttered conditions
- Make sure combustible or flammable material is located away from spark-producing operations
- Provide adequate ventilation to reduce dust and other air contaminants
- Monitor noise levels and provide hearing protection when necessary