

Carving Safety Synopsis

INTRODUCTION

Most of us carvers assume nothing bad will ever happen, and we're usually right. We're used to a small nick, antiseptic, and a band aide. No big deal. We work at home, know where to find the first aid kit, and get on with our work. When we get surprised, or when we see someone else have an accident, we wakeup.

Sometimes we carve outside of our home at classes, rendezvous, clubs, friends, shows, or demonstrations. Little or bigger incidents happen to us or others, and we might not know where to find a first aid kit. Besides a cut we might get something in our eyes or inhale dust from a neighboring carver. Or worse.

Outside of our homes we are guests. We need to respect and honor the host's place and practices. They don't want to be responsible for our mistakes. We show respect by signing a liability waiver for them and any sponsoring club, on the outside chance that something bad happens.

When a club sponsors a class, insurance is needed, and those companies expect competent safety policies, training, and practices. Nothing bad ever happens, until it does, and then our litigious culture tends to kick in. We need insurance.

We don't want you to get injured, ever, whether at your place or elsewhere. Injuries are mostly controlled by you, but not always. Whatever happens, our non-profit clubs cannot afford to be held liable, neither the organization nor the leaders. We will do our best to provide a safe environment and help you and others stay safe. However, we need your best effort to be knowledgeable about and practice good safety.

We need you to read, understand, question, help improve, and eventually agree to these safe practices.

In the long run, as well as the short, safety matters, and it all starts with intent. We trust that you intend to never get injured and will do your best to prevent accidents.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

When using other's shops, respect their rules, property, and processes.

Golden Rule: The shop owner or delegated shop attendant is in charge and is always to be obeyed.

Respect yourself; respect others; respect your tools; respect your project.

Support a culture of respectfully calling out unsafe or questionable practices. Be open to be questioned.

Invisible viruses, bacteria, fungi (mold), vapors (VOC), and dust lurk – be defensive.

Space yourself apart; give it to others.

If you call 911, the ambulance will need your address – know it; delays of even minutes matter.

Locate the shop's first aid kit and water source for washing injuries when you first arrive.

Treat minor injuries quickly; avoid infections.

Safety is about proper tool use as well as awareness and personal conduct.

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Significant injuries come from long term exposure and repetitive operations – hearing loss, carpal tunnel, arthritis, lung injury, blisters, etc.

Take breaks, physically and visually.

Use workbenches at the right height for you to avoid back and joint problems.

Use good lighting and magnification to protect your eyes.

Fear is your friend – listen to it, stop if in doubt, ask others for advice.

Top causes of accidents:

- Tired at the end of day.
- Messy floor and cluttered workspace.
- In a hurry.
- Complacency.
- Distractions.
- No protective gear.
- Taking shortcuts.
- Tripping hazards (power cords, debris, pets)

Smart people make stupid mistakes too – accidents can happen to anyone.

Murphy's Law exists; he was an optimist. [Accidents happen at the worst possible time and cause the most damage].

Shop Safety is a continuous practice. Don't turn it on and off.

Use all your senses - does the situation *Look* right, *Sound* right, *Smell* right, *Feel* right?

If an accident occurs, stop immediately and notify the person in charge.

Wood hazards are not always visible on the surface.

Become familiar with posted emergency instructions.

Dress appropriately for the Shop environment.

HAND TOOL CARVING SAFETY - GENERAL

Carving is relatively safe, but can be lethal for the very young, the very old, and those in-between.

Many carving cuts are from storing or retrieving tools, not when carving.

Flee or Fix unsafe carving environments that are too crowded, dusty, noisy, or messy.

Keep all flesh behind sharp edges or out of their path.

Avoid carving towards yourself.

Small, controlled cuts pose less risk.

Carving injuries go beyond bleeding and include damage to eyes, lungs, ears, or joints.

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Hand carving tools are extremely sharp and can be lethal. You can do great injury to yourself and those nearby, and vice versa.

Don't gesture with tools in your hands; stay away from carvers who do.

Never catch a falling tool.

Start with sharp tools; keep them that way.

Carry your own common first aid supplies.

Wear sturdy closed toe shoes; no high heels, no bare feet, no sandals.

Protect yourself with lap boards, carving gloves, aprons.

Wear a dust mask when appropriate.

HAND TOOL CARVING SAFETY – KNIVES and PALM TOOLS

When using knives, own and wear a glove and thumb guard

A glove will not stop a poke cut

A glove will slow down but might not prevent a slicing cut

Buy a good glove – rated cut level 5 or above

Wear it

HAND TOOL CARVING SAFETY – LONG HANDLED GOUGES

Keep the fewest tools you need nearby and store the rest elsewhere.

Keep both hands behind the cutting edge

Anticipate tools rolling off your bench – reconsider round handles, consider roll guards, tool storage

Don't catch a falling tool

POWER TOOL CARVING SAFETY

[Foredom, Micro Motor, Dremel, Bandsaw, Drill Press, Scroll Saw, Wood Burners, Reciprocating]

Tuck in loose clothing, dangling strings, long hair.

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Don't put yourself between the tool and your work - nothing is worth losing a body part over.

Don't use power tools without training.

Don't use others' tools without their permission.

Power carving tools can be lethal and generate dangerous levels of dust and debris. Eye, lung, and hearing damage are hazards beyond skin injuries.

Remove all jewelry if using powered equipment.

Position safety guards correctly on powered tools.

Use work holding devices – vises, clamps, hold-downs, bench hooks, jigs as appropriate.

Use a clamp if you need your hand to be closer than 6" to the bit, blade, or burr.

Skin injuries from power sanders are usually very memorable, long lasting, and hard to heal.

Use push sticks as appropriate to keep your fingers 6" away from cutting or rotating blades.

Don't challenge any power tool - they are quicker than you can react; more powerful and impersonal.