

Framer Nearly Amputates Toes with Circular Saw

In the afternoon on a clear day, a newly hired framer was on the third floor of a construction site using a circular saw to cut a two-inch by six-inch board. He was employed by a subcontractor providing framing services on the mixed-use building project.

The framer had two years of experience in the trade, but had only been working with the employer for four days. The employer provided him with some safety training when he was hired, but he had not been instructed on the manufacturer's safety manual for use of the circular saw.

The framer set the 2" x 6" board on a block approximately two feet high to make a cut with the circular saw. The saw was in his right hand and his left hand was holding the board. He was not using a clamp to hold down the board, or using both hands on the saw as instructed by the saw manufacturer.

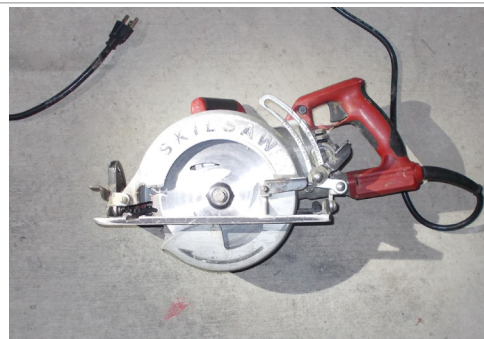
As the framer started his cut, the saw blade stuck in the board and kicked back. The blade struck his right foot and sliced through his boot, cutting his first and second toes.

The framer was immediately taken to the emergency room. The saw nearly severed his toes, but the surgeon was able to save them from being completely amputated.

The framer spent more than a year on light duty before being released back to full duty.

What do you think went wrong?

In the space below, list some of the factors that you think could have contributed to this incident. Then, flip the page over for contributing factors and safety recommendations and requirements.



Saw that the framer was using to make a cut when it kicked back, cutting through his boot.



The tape measure shows the approximate place the worker was standing while cutting the board.



The label on the saw clearly states to hold the saw with both hands. It also warns if the blade binds, the saw may kick back.

Reporting: Employers are required to contact DOSH within eight hours of a workplace fatality or in-patient hospitalization of any employee. See [WAC 296-27-031](http://wac.wa.gov/wac296-27-031).

Contributing Factors

One-handed saw use. The worker operated the circular saw with one hand while holding the board to be cut with the other. Both the employer and injured worker said that they were unaware the tool manufacturer’s warning required use of both hands on the saw while using it. The warning label on the saw clearly stated to hold the saw with both hands.

Improper cutting station. The worker placed the 2” x 6” board on a two-foot high block to make the cut. This positioning put the worker at an awkward body position, and did not provide a safe way to secure the board while cutting it.

Incomplete equipment training. The worker received new hire safety training, and some equipment safety training specific to use of the circular saw, but it did not include the manufacturer’s requirements, including using both hands during operation.

Recommendations

Follow manufacturer safety manual. Train workers to follow the manufacturer’s safety manual for proper use before using equipment. Ensure that manufacturer instructions are provided to workers in the language they are most comfortable using. In this incident:

- The **manufacturer’s safety manual** instructed users to:
“Maintain a firm grip with both hands on the saw and position your arms to resist kickback forces. Position your body to either side of the blade, but not in line with the blade. Kickback could cause the saw to jump backwards, but kickback forces can be controlled by the operator, if proper precautions are taken.”
- The **warning label on the saw** included:
 - Hold saw with both hands.
 - Support and clamp work.
 - If blade binds, saw may kick back.

Set up a proper cutting station that is elevated to allow the worker to have proper body positioning. A common example of a cutting station includes placing a sheet of plywood on top of two saw horses, where the material being cut can be clamped down to the plywood.

Prevent potential saw kickbacks by properly supporting and securing the material to be cut. Operate the saw at a slow and controlled pace. Use the proper blade for the material, and ensure that the blade is at the correct depth and not dull. Always replace the blade if damaged.

Requirements

- **Safe place standards.** The employer must require safety devices, furnish safeguards, and must adopt and use practices, methods, operations, and processes which are reasonably adequate to render such employment and place of employment safe. The employer must do everything reasonably necessary to protect the life and safety of employees. See [WAC 296-155-040\(2\)](#)

Resources

- Chapter 296-155 WAC: Safety Standards for Construction Work— <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=296-155>
- Chapter 206-27 WAC: Recordkeeping and Reporting— <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=296-27>

Safety Training Sign-In (Print Name Legibly) Date: _____

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