Band Saw Safety

A carpenter might use a handheld jigsaw to make curved cuts, most woodworkers turn to a band saw for this. With its continuous cutting action and broad table, the band saw offers better control and cleaner cuts than its small cousin.

As with most tools, setup is very important, as is a sharp blade. With the guides retracted, the blade should be adjusted to run in the center of the upper wheel. Then all of the guides should be adjusted close to the blade, with the side guides set just behind the teeth to avoid being damaged. The user should push firmly but not too hard on the work piece, letting the blade do the work. Most saws have a tension guide on the tension spring for the blade width selected.

The following is a list of safety precautions to consider when cutting with a band saw:

1. Always follow the manufacturer's safety guidelines for your band saw

2. Keep your fingers out of the path of the blade

3. Decrease the feed pressure as you approach the end of the cut

4. Keep the wheel covers shut when the saw is running

5. Adjust the upper guide post approximately 1/4 in. above the work piece before starting the saw. Be extra careful when cutting half round bowl blanks.

6. Keep the upper and lower wheel cover in place until the saw is stopped and disconnected.

7. Disconnect the band saw from the power source before changing blades

8. Always wear eye protection when working with the band saw

9. If the blade breaks or runs off the wheels, do not open the covers until the machine has come to a complete stop

10. Stop the saw before removing small chips that have become stuck in the throat

11. Use push sticks when necessary to avoid placing your fingers near blade.

12. Be sure the work piece stays in contact with the table at the point where the blade exits.

13. The band saw will do a good job of squaring or slicing a log of natural wood but it is very important to start with one flat face to ride on the table. Without a flat face the log could twist or roll causing the blade to get pinched, bent or snap.   First flatten one face with a hand held planer (for example) or fasten the log to a flat board to act as a sled. Once you have one flat face you can cut a second face at right angles to it and thereafter proceed to bowl blanks.

14. Never crosscut a cylindrical piece without proper jigs to hold it in place. If you do the piece could rotate, bind and break the blade or cause injury.

15. Never cut ferrous metals on a band saw used for wood since sparking can cause a fire.

16. Set the height adjustment no more than ¼ inch above the work piece. Cutting a bowl blank from a half log must be done carefully since so much blade must be exposed on the edges.

17. Plan cuts carefully; layout and make relief cuts before cutting long curves and curves of small radii. Turning holes should be made where required. Plan work so that all cuts will be made in the forward direction.

18. If the stock binds or pinches the blade, do not attempt to back the stock out until the power is shut off. Backing up while the machine is running could pull the blade off the wheels. A wedge can be used to open a cut to back the blade out.

19. Keep the floor area surrounding the saw clear of scraps and saw dust.

20. Never make adjustments to the saw while it is running.

21. Leave the machine only after the power is turned off and the blade has stopped moving completely and the upper guide is lowered to the table.

22. Never stand or allow others to stand to the right of the band saw when it is running. If a blade breaks, it can run to the right side of the table.

23. If you hear a clicking noise, turn off the saw at once. This indicates a crack or kink in the blade as it passes through the guide.

24. If there is a grinding noise the blade guides may be interfering with the teeth. Stop and readjust the back and side guides.

25. Always check the table for 90 degree angle to the blade and tighten the table before starting to cut.

26. Never reach over the saw to obtain material from the other side.

BLADE TENSION ADJUSTMEN
HANDWHEEL

UPPER WHEEL GUARD

GUIDE POST LOCK HANDLE

GUIDE POST

ADJUSTMENT SCREWS

BLADE GUIDE

BLADE

MITER GAUGE GRO

TABLE

BLADE SLOT

LOWER WHEEL GUARD

BAND SAW BASE

ARM