

OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Working Safely With Hand-held Jig-saws

[Reference 1910.243 / 1926.304]

While many types of portable saws rip and tear through materials very quickly, a hand-held jig-saw is designed for more intricate or precise cutting jobs. However, you can still easily lose a piece of your finger or suffer some other debilitating injury when using a jig-saw! So here are a few tips to remember every time you are going to use a portable hand-operated jig-saw:

- Inspect the power cord of your jig-saw before use to insure there are no breaks or cuts in the jacket, and that the plug is not damaged. Also make certain to position the cord so it does not get near the moving blade or get damaged by falling material. Immediately turn in any saw found with a defective cord so it can be replaced by an authorized person.
- Make certain the cutting blade installed on your jig-saw is the proper size and speed rating for the brand and model of saw you are using, and that it is suitable for use on the type of materials you will be cutting. Also make sure the blade is firmly secured in place, and that there are no broken teeth, bent or broke sections, or other damage. Periodically check the blade to make sure it has not loosened, and re-tighten as necessary.
- Always secure the material you are cutting to a stable surface with clamps, where applicable, so that it does not move around as you are operating the jig-saw. If the material being cut moves or drops, it can pinch the saw blade and cause it to jam, break, or suffer other damage; it can also cause the saw to kick-back and make contact with you.
- Make sure to hold the jig-saw with two hands when operating; this helps you control the saw and also helps keep your fingers away from the moving portion of the blade that extends below the material being cut. Also, allow the jig-saw blade to come to a complete stop before you withdraw the saw from the material being cut.
- Remember – slow and steady works best when using a jig-saw. So do not apply excessive force when using with a jig-saw, especially when cutting curves and angles.
- Wear all required personal protective equipment such as approved safety glasses or goggles to protect your eyes when operating a jig-saw. Also utilize a face-shield when cutting any material that may shatter. *(Also discuss your company policies regarding other PPE requirements that may be applicable to using a jig-saw at your job site - e.g.: gloves, hearing protection, hard hat, safety-toe footwear . . .).*

Does anyone have any questions or comments about these tips for the safe use of hand-held jig-saws? Anybody have other tips we did not cover here? Please be sure to sign your name to the training certification form so you get credit for attending today's training session.