

OSHA Training Toolbox Talk: Working Safely With Chops Saws & Miter Saws

[Reference 1910.213 / 1926.300]

Chop saws are typically pre-set to cut material at a 90 degree angle, whereas Miter saws can be adjusted to cut materials at various angles. But the hazards of using either type of saw are very similar. Here are a few tips to remember when you are operating a Chop saw or a Miter saw:

- Inspect the power cord of your 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 report any saw found with a defective cord so it can be replaced by an authorized person.
- Make certain the cutting blade installed on your 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, cracks, or other damage. Periodically check the saw blade to make sure it has not loosened, and re-tighten as necessary.
- Always secure the saw to the table or bench to prevent the saw from moving inadvertently. Also make sure to secure material you are cutting with the material vice or clamp provided with the saw, where applicable, so that it does not move around as you are cutting. Also, support the ends of long pieces of material being cut so it does not move or drop, as that can pinch the saw blade and cause it to jam, break, or suffer other damage.
- Make sure to hold the saw handle firmly when operating the saw; and make certain to keep your free hand positioned well away from the blade any time it is moving. Also, allow the saw to come to a complete stop before you place either hand near the blade.
- ALWAYS make sure the manufacturer's guard that covers the saw blade remains in place, and do not tie back or jam the guard into the "open" position. And NEVER operate the saw if the blade guard is missing or altered.
- Wear all required personal protective equipment such as approved safety glasses or goggles to protect your eyes when operating a chop saw or miter 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 chop saw or miter 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 Chop saws and Miter saws? Anybody have another tip 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.