

INTRODUCTION TO Workshop Safety

From the editors of
CANADIAN
Woodworking
& HOME IMPROVEMENT

DIRECT

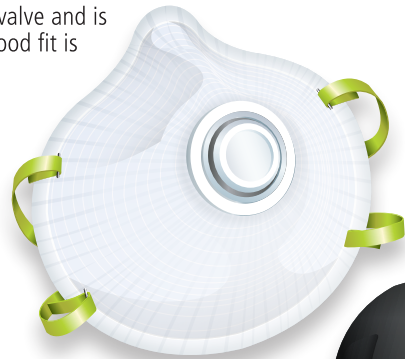
CARTRIDGE RESPIRATOR

These products will protect the user from both finishing vapors and wood dust. They're typically equipped with either one or two replaceable organic-vapor cartridges, and are usually bulkier and heavier than a dust mask / respirator.



DUST MASKS / RESPIRATOR

Great for keeping wood dust out of your lungs. Masks are generally very lightweight while respirators are slightly heavier. Respirators usually have replaceable filters and exhalation valves. A mask sometimes has an exhalation valve and is discarded. A good fit is essential.



FACE SHIELDS

A standard face shield will cover the vast majority of the face, head and neck area, and offers decent protection from flying wood chips and some lighter airborne pieces of wood. The visor can easily be retracted after use. A dust mask or respirator can be used at the same time to protect the user from wood dust. A respirator face shield fits over the head and supplies clean air to the user, while also keeping wood dust and chips away from the users face. It will also protect the user from airborne pieces of wood.



GLASSES

Proper safety glasses should be nearby at all times. If they are easy to put on, you're more likely to wear them. Safety glasses are now available in many styles: sunglasses; bifocal; full-lens magnifying; chemical; over glasses; and children's sizes.



HARDHAT

Not a common woodworking safety item, but it may come in handy for anyone working in their home in a tight space. Hitting your head on a low rafter or sharp object can cause a concussion.



EAR PROTECTION

Small ear plugs fit directly into the outer ear, and often expand slightly to form a good fit. You can purchase reusable and disposable versions. Hearing protectors are worn over the ears and are often available with radio and/or Bluetooth capabilities.



FOOTWEAR

Gone are the days of heavy and bulky protective footwear. Now, shoes and boots that protect feet from heavy loads and sharp objects can also look attractive. Choose a pair that are appropriate for the level of protection you need and that you like the look of so you are more likely to wear them while in the shop.



GLOVES

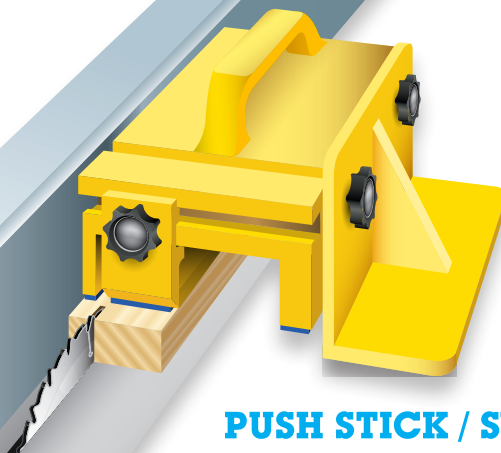
Gloves range in type depending on what level of protection you need. Thin vinyl gloves are usually disposable and offer protection from most finishes and adhesives. Nitrile and neoprene gloves provide a good barrier to most solvents. Anti-vibration, cut-resistant and splinter protection gloves are also available. It's generally dangerous to wear gloves near rotating blades and cutters.



INDIRECT

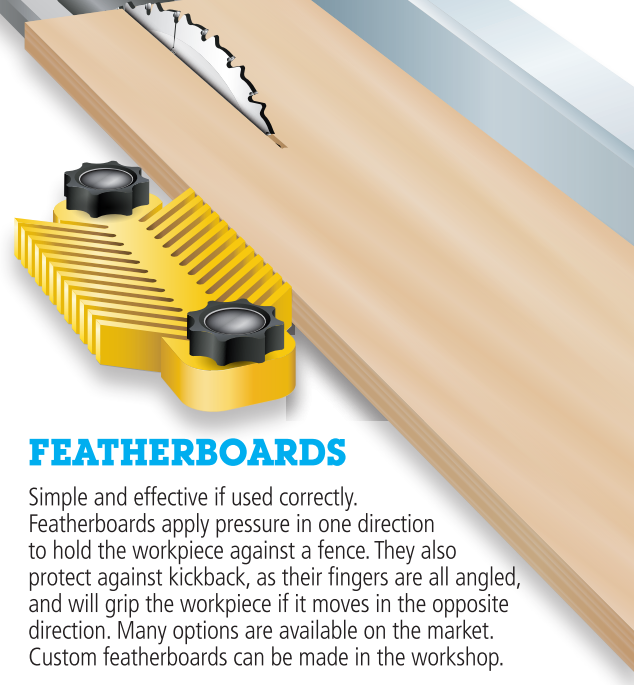
PUSH STICK / SYSTEM

Whether you purchase a few good push stick / systems or make your own, learn when to use them and follow through by actually reaching for them when appropriate. A good push stick / system will be comfortable and simple to use, and control the workpiece, and potential offcut, until the operation is complete.



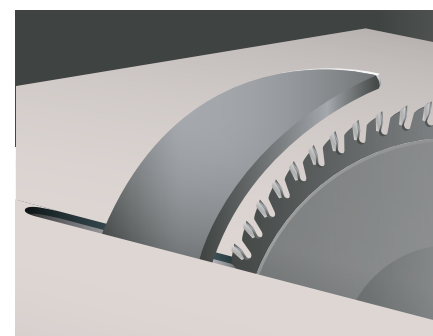
FEATHERBOARDS

Simple and effective if used correctly. Featherboards apply pressure in one direction to hold the workpiece against a fence. They also protect against kickback, as their fingers are all angled, and will grip the workpiece if it moves in the opposite direction. Many options are available on the market. Custom featherboards can be made in the workshop.



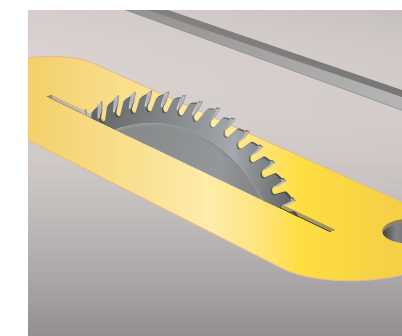
RIVING KNIFE / SPLITTER

Both items are positioned directly behind your table saw's blade, eliminating the possibility of the workpiece pinching on the back side of your blade, causing it to become airborne. A riving knife moves up and down with your blade, as well as tilting on an angle, while a splitter remains stationary.



ZERO CLEARANCE THROAT PLATES

Used to minimize the gap between a table saw blade and the edge of a throat plate to prevent smaller offcuts or workpieces from getting trapped part way into the saw and potentially ejected, causing injury. These can be purchased or shop-made. Many woodworkers have multiples for different blade widths.



OVERARM TABLE SAW DUST COLLECTION GUARD

Performs double-duty by keeping the user's hands away from the blade, as well as removing dust from the cutting area. After-market products are available for many saws, while some woodworkers build their own systems.



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