

Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C187: Sawzall, Saber Saws, Reciprocating Saws

Introduction: Portable reciprocating saws are powerful, versatile tools that use thin, flat, narrow blades. These blades come in assorted lengths and tooth-sets, depending on the applications. They are widely used and can be found in the tool collections of plumbers, electricians, HVAC mechanics, and general carpenters. Reciprocating saws are not difficult to use but their intended purpose prohibits the use of a blade guard. The open blade design allows the application of powerful cutting potential in cramped and restricted spaces. With the proper blade, they can cut metal, wood, and plastic material. They are invaluable for trimming out mechanical chases for fitting HVAC ductwork, drain lines, supply lines, or electrical components where other power tools will not work. Most reciprocating saw injuries involve the hands, fingers, eyes, and face; prolonged use without hearing protection can cause long-term hearing impairment.

Saw Types:

Sawzall: Sawzall-type reciprocating saws require both hands to operate safely and the nature of the tool makes precision cuts difficult.

Saber and Jig saws: Portable jig or saber saws are designed for fine scroll-type cutting in curving, ornamental finish work or where clean radius cuts are needed such as in sink or stove top openings in countertops or pipe holes in the back of cabinets. These applications require that a pilot or starter hole be drilled first before making inside cuts

Follow these safety guidelines when using reciprocating saws:

- Do not allow anyone to use a saw that has not been properly instructed and approved in the processes of its safe operation.
- Be familiar with your power tools. When using a new saw, or one that is foreign to you, take some time to “test-run” it and get a feel for its performance. Read and understand the operator’s manual and follow its instructions. Prior to its use, do a visual and operational inspection to ensure safe mechanical function of the saw.
- Eye protection is extremely important and must always be worn when using a reciprocating saw.
- When operations present potential eye injuries, adequate and appropriate protection must be selected.
- Use a face shield, protective goggles, or approved safety glasses depending on the job performed.
- Hearing protection is required due to the extreme noise levels generated, especially during extended cutting sessions.
- Depending on the material being cut, gloves can be helpful and a dust mask may be required.
- Wear clothing appropriate with reciprocating saw use; avoid long, loose shirtsleeves, neckwear, or untied long hair.
- Check that the electrical circuit is the proper rating and that cords, plugs, and fittings are intact and secure.
- All reciprocating saws must be grounded unless they are double insulated.
- Use only extension cords that are free of splices, taps, bare wires, or frayed and deteriorated insulation. Use 3-prong adaptors.
- Check that spring-loaded on/off trigger switch functions properly.
- Unsafe practices and inadequate housekeeping create potentially dangerous work-zones; keep the work area free of trip hazards such as tangled power cords, cluttered material, scraps, stones, bricks, or other obstacles and obstructions.
- Operate only properly maintained equipment; Check the blade to be sure that it is clean, straight, sharp, and the set screw is tight.
- Carefully examine the work-piece to be cut for knots, nails, or other objects that could cause the saw to bind or kickback.
- During cuts, keep blade speeds at recommended levels; over-pressure on cuts will create hazardous situations.
- If any operational problems are noted, remove the saw from service and get it repaired immediately.
- Always disconnect the power source when changing blades or repairing the saw.
- Avoid using power tools in a wet environment.
- When not in use, store the saw in a dry, secure location.

Conclusion: Reciprocating saws are an excellent accessory to any operation that requires wood-cutting retro-fitting. If good sense and caution are not used, these saws can cause serious injury. Follow these safety guidelines to avoid hazardous situations.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.