

# PULL SAW SAFETY CHECKLIST



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In the area of safety, one of the most common requests I receive from truss and wall framing plant managers is for clear information on how to meet the requirements for safe guarding manually operated saws.

While there are many different models of pull saws used for cutting wall frame and truss components, most share the basic common attribute of being pulled out by hand across hand-held timber, cutting across a solid timber bench, and having an angulation function which pivots the saw at the fence line to allow angled cutting.

Examples of saws in this category include radial arm pull saws like the Tate and Metracut Saws, and basic cross cutting saws such as 'Supa-Saws', and angulating articulated arm pull saws such as the 'Spida' and 'Apollo' Saws.

Adding to the mix, many of these saws also have either OEM or retrofitted automated length stop and saw angulation features.

In GN Guideline #56 I discussed the applicable Australian Standards for woodworking machinery, these being AS1473.1 and AS1472.3, and

the superseded AS1473-1991, and some of the challenges in applying them to saws in truss plants.

Given that every saw installation is unique the onus remains with plant owners to perform a documented hazard analysis on every machine in their plant.

To assist I have compiled a general mechanical and electrical safety checklist for pull saws in truss and wall framing plants.

It is by no means comprehensive but provides some basic physical checks that are an essential part of the process.

How does each of your pull saw stations score against the checklist:

If you ticked yes to all of these categories then congratulations! Your saw risk assessment and maintenance regime is working.

However, the best maintained saw is still dangerous if used incorrectly.

A well guarded, well maintained saw compliments the other prerequisites for a safe working environment, including adequate sawyer training and monitoring ongoing safe working systems.

## Saw Safety Check List

- Permanent fixed upper blade guard to cover the top half of the saw blade.
- Fixed lower blade guard to prevent casual contact with the blade when in retracted position.
- Automatic retraction device, eg. spring, to return the saw carriage home if the handle is released.
- Stroke limiting device to prevent blade passing edge of saw benchtop.
- Saw motor braking system that ensures the blade stops rotating within 10 seconds of shut-off.
- Adjustable upper guard fitted to suit varying timber depths.
- Clean upper guard to ensure view to cutting point is uninhibited.
- Adequate dust extraction fitted.
- Addressing problems associated with trapping and striking points created by moving components, eg Automated length stops and saw angulation. Either eliminate or guard (at both the front and rear of the saw).
- Saw blade sharp and in good condition.
- Fence gap is no bigger than required.
- Saw Angulation mechanism locks positively during cutting.
- Saw can be properly isolated from electrical and air supplies for maintenance activities.
- Electrical components in good state of repair, eg. electrical boxes and cables in good condition, cables securely fastened and rated for flexing where required; no broken buttons.
- Mechanical components in good state of repair, eg. no missing or loose guards, saw arm carriage bearings are not worn, benchtop is not excessively scored.
- Pneumatic components in good state of repair, eg. no leaky fittings or cylinders, filter/reg/lube unit fitted to supply.
- If an Emergency Stop button is fitted, the button works, the circuit is compliant with relevant wiring regulations, and the location is appropriate.
- Saw bench is at an appropriate working height.
- Saw carriage or arms move freely and operator is not required to apply excessive force to pull the blade out.
- Saw carriage handle is on the correct side of the saw for cutting method employed.