

Guarding woodworking bandsaws

What is the problem?

Bandsaws that are not guarded, ineffectively guarded or poorly maintained.

What are the risks?

Unguarded bandsaws can allow workers' hands and fingers to come into contact with the blade. Lack of guarding also allows workers' clothing to become entangled in the exposed bandsaw wheels.

If a blade is dull or has teeth missing, the material being cut can judder or kick back.

These risks can result in serious injuries, including amputations and lacerations.

What is a solution to the problem?

Bandsaws must be guarded. Guarding must prevent access to the bandsaw blade, while allowing the worker to see the material being cut.

If necessary, a push stick should be used to guide the work piece through the process, allowing the worker to keep their fingers and hands clear of the blade.

The following guards are the most effective to reduce or eliminate the risk of injury:

- **Interlocked guards** – The band wheel guards should be interlocked so removal or opening of the guards while the bandsaw is operating will immediately cut power to the machine. There will be run-down time for the band wheels to stop turning. A worker should not access the bandsaw wheels or blade until the bandsaw has come to a complete stop.
- **Fitted guards** – A height-adjustable guard is installed over the exposed section of blade on the bandsaw. The guard should be positioned just above the height of the material the blade is cutting. The guard should be adjustable to allow for cutting materials of varying thickness.

The bandsaw brake pedal should be used to stop the cutting blade before any adjustment of the blade or cutting new material.

Bandsaw blades should be well-maintained and kept sharp. Vibration-free equipment will enable better and faster cuts and improve blade life. Wear patterns on the blade can indicate the band wheels need to be adjusted or the blade guide is misaligned or worn and needs to be replaced.

Each worker must understand and be able to demonstrate safe operation of the bandsaw. No worker should operate the bandsaw unless they are properly trained and supervised. Records of provided training should be kept as verification.

Regular maintenance should be carried out in accordance with manufacturer specifications. Inspections and maintenance should be documented, including the testing of interlocked guarding by a competent person such as an electrician. A history of maintenance records should be kept while the machinery is in use.

Further Information

WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free: 1800 136 089

Email: info@worksafe.vic.gov.au

worksafe.vic.gov.au

Australian Standard

AS 1473 – 1991: *Guarding and safe use of woodworking machinery*

AS 4024.1 – 2006: *Safety of machinery*

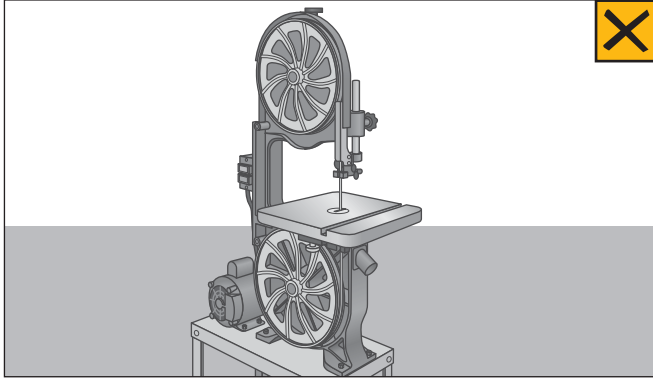
AS 1473.2 – 2001: *Wood processing machinery – Safety: Finishing machinery – Common requirements*

AS 1473.4 – 2001: *Wood processing machinery – Safety: Finishing machinery – Bandsawing machines*

(Health and Safety Solution continued overleaf)

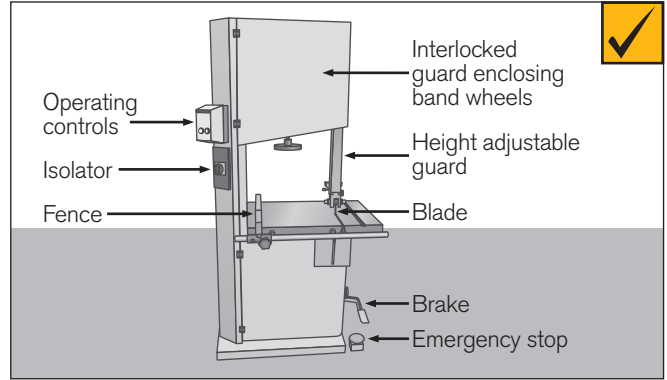
A Health and Safety Solution

The problem



An unguarded bandsaw puts workers at high risk of injury from the blade and rotating parts.

The solution



A guarded bandsaw encloses the wheels and prevents access to the blade.