

October 2024

Portable Bandsaw Injuries

Purpose: In June 2023, an Operating Experience Level 3 (OE-3) was issued titled “Preventing Injuries from Power Saws,” <https://www.energy.gov/ehss/articles/preventing-injuries-power-saws> which highlighted 12 incidents involving work with various types of saws. Of the 12, five involved portable bandsaws.

Since the issuance of that June 2023 OE-3, there have been at least five more incidents reported into the Computerized Accident Incident Reporting System (CAIRS) database involving portable bandsaws. Due to the severity of the events, this notice along with the June 2023 OE-3 should be used to raise operational awareness of potential hazards when using portable bandsaws.

Recent Incident Information:

Event #1: A worker was adjusting the blade of a portable bandsaw, and inadvertently hit the trigger of the saw which activated the blade leading to a laceration on the worker’s right ring finger.

Event #2: A worker was cutting material with a portable bandsaw. The worker set the saw down and inadvertently contacted the blade resulting in a laceration to their finger.



Event #3: The worker was using a DeWalt portable bandsaw and changed their supporting hand placement from the secondary handle to resting on one of the wheel shrouds and inadvertently contacted the blade resulting in a laceration to their finger.

Event #4: A worker was cutting through wood when the DeWalt portable bandsaw became lodged in the wood. The worker was holding the portable bandsaw with the trigger grip in the left hand and the forward grip in the right hand. The worker reached under the portable band saw to release the blade from the wood and inadvertently pressed the trigger switch thus momentarily energizing the saw causing the blade to grab their right index finger resulting in a laceration of their finger.

Event #5: A worker was cutting material with a Makita portable bandsaw when the low battery indicator activated. The worker went to pull the bandsaw back from the material with one hand on saw and the other on the material and during this time, the worker accidently pressed the trigger activating the saw cutting their finger.

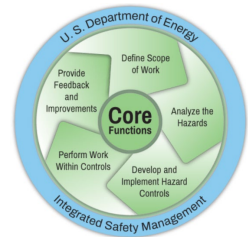


Recent Case Demographics:

- All five workers have 12 months or more experience on this job/equipment.
- Four of the five workers have been employed more than 12 months at their current employer. One worker's length of employment was 3-12 months.
- Four of the five cases had to receive medical treatment in an emergency room.
- The average age of the injured worker was 30 years old. Ages range from 19 years to 47 years old.
- All the injuries resulted in lacerations to the fingers and all but one required sutures. The number of sutures required ranged from 2 to 7.
- None of the injuries required the worker to have any days away from work. However, two of the injuries involved 15 and 37 days of job transfer or restriction because of their injuries.
- The incidents involved both DOE contractor and sub-contractor workers.
- Of the five incidents, two occurred at the same site. The others occurred at three different sites.
- Of the five incidents, two occurred within NNSA; two within EM; and one within SC.
- All saws were battery-operated (cordless).

Key Points:

- Ensure all work is carried out following the five core functions of DOE's Integrated Safety Management: <https://www.energy.gov/ehss/integrated-safety-management-ism>
- The primary hazard when using portable bandsaws is contact with the moving blade.
- All the injuries resulted in serious lacerations.
- For all battery-operated saws, always switch off the saw and remove the battery cartridge before carrying out any work on the saw.
- All workers including subcontractors must read all safety warnings and all instructions of portable bandsaws before they use them.



For questions or to provide feedback related to this OPEX Awareness, please contact Craig Schumann, CAIRS Program Manager at (630) 252-9176 or craig.schumann@hq.doe.gov. For questions and feedback about the [DOE Corporate Operating Experience Program](#) and its products, please contact Maria Dikeakos, DOE Corporate Operating Experience and Lessons Learned Program Manager at (631) 524-0229 or Maria.Dikeakos@hq.doe.gov.



OPEX Awareness Notice

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