



SAFETY ALERT

Incident Type: Finger laceration requiring first aid treatment

Date: 02/05/14

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Incident Description

The undergraduate student is enrolled in Sculpture 2 course. The student stayed after class to work on a wood project in the Riley Hall woodshop. The student was using a table saw to make an angled cut to a 6 inch long piece of pine 2" x 4". (See photo 1 illustrating table saw setup.) Near the completion of the cut the student's left hand was guiding the material past the saw blade. Pressure was still being applied after the cut was completed causing the student's left thumb to come in contact with the saw blade briefly. This resulted in a small laceration to the palm side of the left thumb requiring first aid treatment.

Photo 1



Incident Findings:

- The student received shop orientation at the beginning of Spring 2014 semester. This orientation included discussion of shop rules and demonstrated proper use of equipment. Use of aids such as push sticks is also reviewed.
- Table saw blade guard was temporarily removed for this task.
- A push stick is available at this piece of equipment but was not used for this task.
- The dimensions of the wood (1.5" x 3.5" x 6") are not adequate for the use of the table saw for this task. A better decision would have been to make the angled cut on the 2" x 4" material while the material was still long, 18" or greater. After the angled cut is made on the table saw, then cut the material to

the length of 6" on a Mitre Saw.

- The University of Notre Dame Metal or Woodworking Shop Policy states....
"Undergraduates are not to work alone in a University Shop. Undergraduate shop work is to be supervised by someone such as the faculty member, shop safety coordinator, or designated shop monitor. Exception: Undergraduates may work unsupervised in a shop for tasks which do not involve the use of power tools such as gluing, painting, or staining. Undergraduates must understand that their work is limited when working unsupervised."
- Emergency process was followed properly.

Root Cause:

The student contacted the table saw blade due to several contributing factors. This cut could have been made when the material was at full length to allow for better control when passing it through the table saw. The blade guard was removed so that this task could be performed. There was a push stick available that the student failed to use. Multiple students were using power tools unsupervised at the time of the injury.

Recommended Actions

- Incorporate minimum material dimensions for table saw use into woodshop training material.
- Provide proper oversight during undergraduate use of woodshop.
- Review use of push stick with student.
- Determine if department has clear expectations and consistent enforcement when a safety rule violation occurs.
- Determine better saw blade guard OR replace existing table saw with "SawStop" technology.
Approved. "SawStop" purchased and expected to be in place in late April 2014.