

NEW RULES FOR TABLE SAW SAFETY

Cal/OSHA has revised rules for table saw operation, addressing guarding, anti-kickback devices, definitions of woodcutting processes and push stick requirements.

The guard hood can be fixed in place, manually adjusted, or self-adjustable. It should cover the saw blade that extends above the table top and above the material being cut. Self-adjustable hoods lift up and over the stock material as it's fed into the saw blade. Fixed or manually adjusted hoods should allow a maximum gap of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch between the stock material and the bottom of the hood. Kickbacks occur when wood is caught by the rear saw blade edge, lifted off the table surface, and propelled toward the operator. The guard hood should prevent kickbacks and work for all material thicknesses.

For rip cuts, a spreader, splitter, or riving knife that holds the cut edges of material apart must be securely fastened to the table saw to prevent kick-backs. A rip cut is made parallel to the grain of natural wood; crosscuts are against the grain. Rip cuts are through the long side of the manufactured wood stock or parallel to the edge of the stock. Cal/OSHA defines crosscuts on laminated or manufactured wood products with no grain, as cutting through the short of a rectangular piece of stock.

A spreader is not required for crosscutting, grooving, dadoing, or rabbeting operations. However, combs (featherboards) or appropriate jigs are necessary when a standard blade guard can't be used in these operations, including jointing, or moulding. Align spreaders with the blade and not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch away from the back of the saw blade. The spreader should be thinner than the saw kerf left by the blade.

Cal/OSHA requires guarding on hand-fed table saws to prevent accidental contact with the saw blade, and flying splinters or broken saw teeth. A push stick, other material with a notch cut, or a block of wood with a handle can be used to push material through the table saw.