

This is a compilation of my life experiences, comments from friends, and the words and wisdom (and stupidity) from Google searches and YouTube videos.

Woodworking safety is not a "one size fits all" thing. We all need to decide on our own what safe practices consist for us.

Environmental Safety

A clean and non-cluttered work area

Air quality, good ventilation, dust collectors for machines, air filtration for people

Adequate lighting

NO DISRUPTIVE PEOPLE

Having somebody else with you is a good idea, especially if you get hurt.

If you are tired, distracted, angry, nervous, agitated (etc) it may be best to stop for a while

Basic safety:

Dust mask

Ear protection

Eye protection

Shop apron

Gloves if appropriate

Keep long hair, beards, and loose clothing AWAY from tools

Consult more experienced friends if a particular operation is outside of your comfort level.

Jigs, clamps, hold downs and CA glue

These things are very helpful when making multiple things the same size (think making 10 cabinet doors with common dimensions) AND they can also be used to help mill small parts without getting fingers too close to cutting tools.

General tool safety:

Keep fingers a safe distance from cutting blades and bits (consider jigs and clamp downs!)

Keep tools properly lubricated (if appropriate)

Cutting tools work better when sharp and clean

Check fan belts for wear, replace as necessary

Removable bits and blades must be secure

Power cords (if a corded tool) need to be safe

Use tools for their proper function

Table Saw:

PUSH STICKS

Feather boards

Riving knife

Roller guides

Outfeed table

Additional people for BIG CUTS

Saw stop and blade covers

Miter saw:

Let saw come to full speed before cutting

Let saw come to full stop before moving material

Drill Press:

Remove chuck key from chuck before turning drill press on

Jointers and planers:

Do not force wood through them faster than they can work.

Stand to the side, kickback can be very painful

Band saw

Set the guard appropriately for the material being cut

Use the proper blade for the cuts being made

Crud, had an incident. What to do?

Assess the situation. Are you hurt? Is somebody else hurt? Has the work piece been projected into a dangerous position? Is a tool damaged?

Then act. Turn off tools, secure the work area, tend to the wounded. If you are not sure about an injury to a person, do not be afraid to call 911. Better safe than sorry. Also remember, a little blood looks like a LOT when it is outside the body.

First aid. Not going to try to cover this here. Sign up for a course from a QUALIFIED organization, not some old dude from your wood working club. That being said, ... stop the bleeding, clean the cut or wound, and get medical attention.

OK, so you have recovered, what next? (Hint, mentoring!)

Do not be afraid to talk about what happened to you, including how it happened, what could have prevented it from happening, and what was involved in your recovery. When we talk about these things we give a more accurate picture of woodworking. Yes, it can be a lot of fun. Yes, it can be dangerous. Yes, you can prevent injury. And yes, you can survive accidents.