

Safety in the Workshop

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The list of SAFETY ISSUES below is not exhaustive and is not intended to be the bible for health and safety in the workshop. It is designed to get you thinking about safety in your workshop and to give you some ideas where to begin. It would probably be best if you took the checklist inserted here to your workshop. You can then read through it, look at the various areas mentioned and mark off each item with a Yes or No, depending on whether they are FULLY in place in your workshop or not. If anything does not fully comply use the space under each question for a comment. You can use this to make a list of items for attention. Put the date on the top of the list and refer back to it when you do your next safety check. Hopefully things will have improved! Add your own queries and ideas to the list. Send them on and we will include them in future lists.

Electrical Connections

- **Do not do it if you are not sure** - Installation and repair of electrical equipment must be done by a suitably knowledgeable person. If you are in any way unsure of what you are about to do then LEAVE IT and get advice or help. DO NOT take chances with electricity.
- **Never overload** - Do not overload your wiring, sockets, plugs, extension leads etc. Overloads cause fires.
- **Correct fuses** - Most plugs come complete with a 13Amp fuse. 13 Amp is too high for many electrical items. Check the rating of the appliance and insert a suitable fuse.
- **Proper connections** - Do not use improvised connections e.g. pushing wires directly into sockets etc. Fit a proper plug with the correct size fuse.
- **Regular inspections** - Do a regular inspection of all your electrical installations and machines. Check for any deterioration in wires, connections, conduits etc. Check wires where they bend often, especially where they go into plugs and machinery. Open plugs and see that the correct fuse is still in place and check all screws for tightness. One hour or less will cover most workshops and you may be surprised at the number of loose connections you find.

Machinery

- **Loose clothing** - Loose clothing, long hair, earphone wires etc. can catch in revolving equipment and cause serious injury. Make sure clothing is properly secured, including sleeves before approaching and turning on machinery. Wires for personal equipment, headsets, personal air filters etc. should be worn inside clothing.
- **Stability** - Make sure all machinery is properly secured and cannot move whilst in use.
- **ON/Off switches** - Make sure that On/Off switches are accessible whilst the machine is in use. It may be a good idea to fit some sort of emergency cut off that is easily accessible if things go wrong.
- **Personal protection** - Always wear suitable personal protection whilst using machinery. This may include some or all of the following: Gloves, hat, suitable footwear, eye protection, ear protection, breathing protection etc.
- **Trailing leads** - Always be careful with trailing leads. Leads from fixed machinery should be suitably secured so as not to get in the way whilst using the equipment and also that they cannot be tripped over by others. Trailing leads from mobile equipment should be regularly inspected for damage or wear and replaced where necessary. Always be careful that trailing leads do not come into contact with moving parts and are suitably placed so that they can not be tripped over by yourself or others. Someone tripping over a trailing lead can pull the device from the hands of the user and cause serious injury.

Dust

- **Extraction** - By far the best way to deal with dust is to extract it from the work area at the source. Fit suitable extraction at all dust producing equipment. E.g. Lathes, saws, planers, sanders, etc.
- **Collection** - Dust should be collected, where possible, outside the work area so as not to re-contaminate the air.
- **Removal** - Be careful when emptying or removing collected dust. It can still get airborne and enter your lungs. Wear suitable dust protection at all times.
- **Lung protection** - Lung protection cannot be over-emphasised. Remember all airborne particles can be breathed in. Do not remove your dust protection as soon as you stop sanding. The finest particles, these are the most dangerous, can remain in the air for quite a long time and can find their way into your lungs long after you stopped work.
Be sure to wear dust protection when cleaning and tidying your workshop.
- **Ear protection** - Bear in mind that you need to protect your ears from dust as well as noise.
- **Eye protection** - Eye protection should be worn when working at any machine as well as when doing any other job that could result in pieces flying about, e.g. hand carving. Ordinary prescription glasses are not sufficient protection for your eyes. Wear proper goggles.

Lifting

- **Get help** - Always know something about the weight of what you are about to lift. Do not just grab a box and lift it just because it looks like it may be light enough. Always get help if something is very heavy, if you are unsure of its weight or if it is an awkward size or shape.
- **Use trolley** - Use a trolley where possible. Especially if the item has to be moved to another area.
- **Store properly** - Put some thought into where you store heavy items. Do not put them up too high or too low. Make it easy for further moving. Take items out of a box, if possible, rather than keeping them all together. Do not store in unsuitable conditions where packaging can deteriorate and disintegrate when next being moved.

Housekeeping

- **Rubbish** - Do not keep unnecessary rubbish in your workshop. It can be a fire hazard and cause stumbling hazards.
- **Trailing leads** - Trailing leads can cause the user and others to trip. Tidy them up!
- **Storage** - Have a place for everything and put everything in its place. This makes for a much safer workshop and also makes it much easier to find things.
- **Exits** - Keep exits free of all obstructions. You may need to beat a hasty retreat.
- **Lighting** - Good lighting is essential in any workshop. Keep a supply of spare bulbs. Watch those trailing leads from lights - tie them away from moving parts.
- **Storing chemicals** - Watch where and how you store your chemicals. Read and follow manufacturers instructions. Be extra careful if you have little ones visiting your workshop!
- **Fire** - Install a smoke alarm. Hang up a fire extinguisher. Keep a fire blanket handy.
- **First aid** - Keep a properly stocked first aid kit in your workshop.
- **Phone to house** - It may be a good idea to have a phone in your workshop. Just in case you get into trouble and need to call for help. There are lots of inexpensive wireless phones available.
- **Essential Phone Numbers** - Display prominently, next to your phone, the numbers of the fire brigade, emergency service of the closest hospital, your GP and the police.
- **Panic button** - Consider installing a panic button. Just a doorbell and a pushbutton or two. If you were to have an accident and should be unable to go to the house it would bring help.

For your convenience the CHECKLIST on the following page is also inserted here on a loose sheet. What's more, you can download it all from the Guild website - and print further copies - www.irishwoodturnersguild.com (under "Resources")

These Safety guidelines are not necessarily complete and exhaustive. And they should be kept dynamically up to date - your help, input and suggestions would be appreciated!
Please contact Owen Furniss, Guild Webmaster, Tel: 1 4061 330



WORKSHOP SAFETY HEALTH CHECK

Date of Check: _____

Tick Yes or No in the box on the right of each question. Enter comments/ items for attention below each.

1. Are ALL fuses of the correct rating?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are ALL wires. Leads. Plugs and other connections good?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are you happy that no wire or socket is overloaded?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are ALL machines properly secure and safe from movement whilst in use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are you FULLY SATISFIED that you can easily turn off all machinery in an emergency?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are leads to all machinery properly secure and away from moving parts?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are leads to all machinery properly secure so that no one can trip over them?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do you have all the necessary personal safety equipment readily available?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Is all your personal safety equipment in good usable condition?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Is your dust extraction equipment in top working condition?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Are all items stored at a suitable height?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Are all chemicals stored as per manufacturers instructions?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Is ALL your floor space free from debris? Wood, tools, wires, rubbish	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Are all exits free from ALL obstructions?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Do you have a working smoke alarm, fire extinguisher and fire blanket easily available?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Is your first aid kit fully stocked?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>