Masonry and Concrete Saws Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

Masonry saws are essential tools for most hardscaping jobs. They quickly and precisely cut brick, stone, and concrete but also pose an array of safety and health hazards when not handled correctly.

What’s the Danger

DANGERS/HAZARDS OF MASONRY AND CONCRETE SAWS

- Cutting blades should be the correct size, installed properly, guarded at all times, and speed should not exceed the manufacturer’s suggested revolutions-per-minute (RPM).
- Saws pose kick-back, push-back, and pull-in dangers if they cannot run freely through the cutting material.
- Hand-held saws pose dangers if kick-back occurs because the worker can lose control and drop the saw.
- Mounted saws should be kept on firm, flat surfaces for stability.
- Walk-behind saws keep the worker more removed from the cutting blade.
- The dust created by concrete and masonry saws can be a serious health hazard.
- Employees and supervisors must be trained on the health hazards of the dust, the methods used by the employer to control employee exposures.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

EMPLOYEE DOS

- Know what PPE your company requires for operating masonry saws and wear it.

- Inspect masonry saws for damage or excessive wear before using them.
- Ensure blades are sharp, clean, and oiled. Inspect them for cracks before use.
- Keep people not involved with the work at a safe distance.
- Be aware of your surroundings and the position of the power tool in relation to your body.
- Operate saws according to manufacturers' and your employer's guidelines.
- Keep cords away from cutting surfaces.
- Unplug/disconnect saws when you aren't using them, before servicing them, and when changing blades.
- Ensure work areas are well-lighted and clean to prevent slips or trips with or around masonry saws.
- Make sure cords from electric saws don't present tripping hazards.
- Maintain good footing and balance. Sturdy work boots can help with this.
- Use only heavy-duty, outdoor-rated, three-prong extension cords that have not been modified and are
- approved for use by the saw manufacturer.
- Make sure the saw blade is not touching anything before you turn on a saw.
- Hold handheld masonry saws with both hands.
- Turn off a saw before carrying it anywhere.
- Ensure gas-powered saws have no fuel leaks. A spark from a saw can ignite any leaking fuel.
- Turn off fuel-powered saws and let them cool down before refueling.
- After you turn off a handheld saw, hold it away from your body until the blade stops turning.
- Know that anytime brick, stone, or concrete are cut, crystalline silica dust could be in the air.
- When wet cutting, check that hoses are securely connected and are not cracked or broken.
- When using vacuum dust collection systems, keep the vacuum hose clear and free of debris, kinks, and tight bends; turn the vacuum off and on regularly to reduce dust buildup on

the filter.
- Follow your employer’s instructions for wearing a respiratory, if needed.
- Vacuum dust from your clothes before leaving the job site and change into clean clothes, if possible.

EMPLOYEE DON’TS

- Operate a masonry saw until you have been properly trained to do so.
- Use a damaged or improperly operating saw. Examine the saw before use and report problems.
- Remove blade guards or other safety devices. Immediately report any missing or broken safety devices.
- Wear jewelry or loose clothes.
- Use worn electric cords or cables.
- Put hands or other body parts close to the cutting line.
- Use a masonry saw on a scaffold.
- Use your leg to prop up a saw.
- Cut masonry or stone unless you are using water or a vacuum system to control dust.
- Operate gas-powered saws in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces.
- Modify cords. Never remove ground prongs from cord-connected saws or extension cords.
- Remove cords from receptacles by pulling the cords. Grasp the plug instead.
- Work bent over or in other awkward positions and avoid ergonomics-related injuries

FINAL WORD

Dust created from masonry and concrete have historically wrought havoc with workers in the from of silicosis and long cancer. These dangers still exist today despite the wide use of respirators in the workplace.