

AXMINSTER WOODTURNERS CLUB

A Guide to Safety at the Lathe

*AWGB safety Advice makes it clear that Clubs are not included in H&S at Work legislation but that they are expected to promote best practice and ensure that an annually reviewed Risk Assessment is in place. Common sense should prevail. Remember that **safety is the responsibility of every member** and no member should undertake unsafe practice to the detriment of others.*

1. Safe, effective use of a wood lathe requires study and knowledge of procedures for using this machine. Read and thoroughly understand the label warnings on the lathe and in the owner's/operator's manual.
2. Always wear safety goggles or safety glasses that include side protectors and a full face shield when needed. Wood dust can be harmful to your respiratory system. Use a dust mask or helmet and dust collection system when sanding. (The Club holds a small stock of safety glasses but members are advised to provide their own safety glasses and dust mask)
Wear hearing protection if you find noise levels excessive.
3. When using the lathe ensure clothing is tight at the cuff, wear appropriate footwear (no open shoes), tie back long hair, do not wear gloves and avoid wearing jewellery or any dangling objects that may catch in rotating parts or accessories.
4. Check the lathe speed is at zero, or the lowest speed on non-variable lathes, before commencing work. Use slower speeds for larger diameter or rough pieces and increased speed for smaller diameters and pieces that are balanced. If the lathe is shaking or vibrating, lower the speed. If the work piece vibrates, always stop the machine to check the reason.
5. Make certain that the belt guard or cover is in place. Check that all clamping devices (locks), such as on the tailstock and tool rest are tight.
6. Rotate your work piece by hand to make sure it clears the tool rest and bed before turning the lathe "on". Be sure that the work piece turns freely and is firmly mounted. Turn the lathe "off" before adjusting the tool rest.
7. Exercise caution when using wood with cracks, splits, bark, knots, irregular shapes or protuberances. Seek guidance from experienced members at Club 'Hands-on' sessions
8. Hold turning tools securely on the tool rest and hold the tool in a controlled but comfortable manner. Always use a slower speed when starting until the work piece is balanced. This helps avoid the possibility of an unbalanced piece jumping out of the lathe and striking the operator.
9. When running a lathe in reverse, it is possible for a chuck or faceplate to unscrew unless it is securely held in place by the tail stock.

10. Know your capabilities and limits. An experienced woodturner may be capable of techniques and procedures not recommended for less experienced turners. Members are expected to model best practice.

11. When using a Chuck ensure that the jaws will close to the centre prior to operation and that they are not expanded beyond the manufacturers limits.

Flying jaws can kill or seriously maim, take great care.

Remove chuck keys and adjusting tools before starting the lathe.

12. When using a faceplate, be certain the work piece is solidly mounted. When turning between centres, be certain the work piece is secure.

13. Always remove the tool rest before sanding or polishing operations.

14. Don't overreach, keep proper footing and balance at all times.

15. Check that the lathe is in good repair. Check for damaged parts, alignment, binding of moving parts and other conditions that may affect its operation.

16. Keep tools sharp and clean for better and safer performance. Don't force a dull tool. Don't use a tool for a purpose not intended. Modified tools should not be used in club hands on sessions unless approved by the Committee.

17. Consider your work environment. Keep work area well lit.

18. Stay alert. Watch what you are doing, use common sense. If you are unsure about any equipment ask a member of the Committee. Don't operate tools when you are tired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

19. Guard against electric shock. Inspect electric cables for damage. Only use one extension lead. Check total load & allow for coiled / uncoiled ratings.

20. Never leave the lathe running unattended. Turn power off. Don't leave the lathe until it comes to a complete stop.

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