

CIRCULAR SAWS — GUARDS, BLADES AND KICKBACK

ACTIVITY RAMS — ADAPT TO SITE BEFORE USE

Saw benches · mitre and sliding saws · handheld and plunge saws · guarding, blade changes and isolation

KD-RA-CA-002 Rev A0

Statutory basis: PUWER 1998 — saws suitable for the work and the material (reg 4), maintained in efficient working order and good repair (reg 5), inspected where their safety depends on it (reg 6), used only by people given adequate training (reg 9), and isolated from their energy source before blade changes and adjustment (reg 19); portable electrical equipment inspected and tested at intervals set by the risk, following HSE HSG107 (3rd edition, 2013); Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 for saw noise; CDM 2015 regs 13 and 15. This document is the recorded safe system of work required by HSWA 1974 s.2(2)(a) and MHSWR 1999 regs 3 and 5.

1 DOCUMENT AND PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

RAMS REFERENCE	PROJECT / SITE REF	SITE NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE PREPARED	NEXT REVIEW DATE
CLIENT / PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR	PLANNED START	DURATION	OPERATIVES	SUPERVISING THE WORK

2 SCOPE OF WORKS

Safe use of the circular saws carpenters use on site — site saw benches, mitre and sliding compound saws, handheld and plunge circular saws: pre-use checks, guard and riving knife set-up, blade selection and changing with the tool isolated, workpiece support and kickback, electrical supply, noise, and who may use them.

This document does not cover: wood dust from the cutting (KD-RA-CA-001), abrasive wheels, disc cutters and other small plant (KD-RAMS-PL-005), fixed workshop machinery such as planers and spindle moulders (workshop assessment), and the carpentry the saws are used for (KD-RAMS-CJ-001 and KD-RAMS-CJ-002).

SITE-SPECIFIC SCOPE, LOCATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

3 RISK ASSESSMENT — SCORE EACH RISK FOR THIS SITE, THEN ADD WHAT IS MISSING

The hazards and controls below are the starting point for this activity, written by a working main contractor. They are not complete for your site until a competent person has scored each risk, added the site-specific hazards, and struck out anything that does not apply. Rate risks High / Medium / Low before and after controls.

1. Hand contact with a running or coasting blade

At risk: Saw user

Controls: Guards fitted and working before every use: the lower guard of a handheld or mitre saw returns freely and fully; the saw bench top guard is set down to the work. Guards are never wedged, tied back or removed. Push sticks near a saw bench blade; hands out of the blade's line; no gloves near the blade. On mitre saws, short pieces are clamped, and the hand stays put until the head has returned and the blade has stopped.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

2. Kickback — the workpiece thrown back, or the saw driven back at the user

At risk: Saw user, anyone behind

Controls: Riving knife fitted and set as the manufacturer instructs on every saw that has one. Material supported both sides of the cut so the kerf cannot close on the blade. No freehand cutting on a saw bench — fence or mitre gauge every time. Stand out of line of the blade. Handheld saws with both hands on the handles and the work clamped; plunge saws on their guide rail.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

3. Blade changes and adjustments with the saw able to start

At risk: Saw user

Controls: Plug out or battery removed before touching the blade, guard or riving knife — the switch is not isolation. Blade lock and the manufacturer's key only; flanges and arbor clean; blade direction checked against the arrow on the guard.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

4. Wrong, damaged or overspeed blade — teeth or fragments thrown

At risk: Saw user, others nearby

Controls: The blade's marked maximum speed is at least the tool's speed; diameter and bore match the tool, using only the reducing rings supplied for it. Blades with cracks, missing or damaged teeth, heat discolouration or warping are withdrawn. Blade type suited to the material.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

5. Hidden nails, screws and ties in existing or reclaimed timber

At risk: Saw user, others nearby

Controls: Reclaimed and existing timber checked with a metal detector and fixings removed before cutting. A blade that strikes metal is stopped and inspected before further use.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

6. Electric shock from damaged tools and leads

At risk: Saw user

Controls: Battery tools or a reduced low voltage supply; lead, plug and casing checked by the user before each use; formal inspection and testing at intervals set by the risk; damaged tools tagged and withdrawn; leads routed clear of the cut and of water.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

7. Unstable set-up, poor lighting and a cluttered floor round the saw

At risk: Saw user

Controls: Saw bench or mitre saw on its stand, level and secured, at a comfortable working height — never on the floor. Long lengths on roller stands or extension tables. The area lit and offcuts cleared as they fall; nobody behind the saw bench in line with the blade.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

8. Noise from saws, particularly the saw bench

At risk: Saw user, others nearby

Controls: Noise assessed; quieter blades chosen where available; saw benches sited away from others; hearing protection worn by the user, and around the saw where the assessment marks a hearing protection zone.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

9. Use by people not trained on that type of saw

At risk: Operatives

Controls: Saw benches and mitre saws used only by operatives trained in that type of saw and named by the supervisor; young persons only under the arrangements their own risk assessment sets; the manufacturer's instructions kept with the tool.

INITIAL (H/M/L)	RESIDUAL (H/M/L)	SITE-SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL CONTROLS, OR N/A	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

Site-specific hazards not listed above — every site has at least one:

HAZARD	WHO IS AT RISK	CONTROLS	INITIAL H/...	RESIDUAL...	ACTION OWNER	BY WHEN

4 METHOD — SEQUENCE OF WORK

- Confirm the user is trained and named for that type of saw, and that the manufacturer's instructions are available.
- Site the saw on its stand, level and secure, with space, lighting and support for long lengths, away from walkways.
- Check the supply: battery or reduced low voltage; lead, plug and casing undamaged; inspection label in date.
- With the saw isolated, check the blade — type, size, speed marking and condition — and set the guards and riving knife to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Check the material for nails, screws and ties and remove them.
- Connect the extraction and put on eye and hearing protection.
- Make each cut with the work supported and held — fence, clamp or guide rail — standing out of line of the blade. On a mitre saw, clamp short pieces and wait for the head to return before moving the hand.
- STOP and isolate if a guard sticks, the blade binds, burns or strikes metal, or the saw behaves unusually. Tag it, report it and do not carry on.
- Isolate before every blade change, adjustment, or clearing of offcuts near the blade.
- At the end of the day, isolate, vacuum down, store the saw with the blade guarded, and record any defects.

SITE-SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS TO THE SEQUENCE**5 PLANT, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS**

- | | |
|---|--|
| Saw bench with top guard, riving knife and push sticks | Roller stands or extension tables |
| Mitre or sliding compound saw on a stand, with work clamp | Metal detector for reclaimed timber |
| Handheld and plunge circular saws with guide rail | Blades matched to each tool and material |

INSPECTION / THOROUGH EXAMINATION REFS**COSHH ASSESSMENT REFS****6 PPE — THE LAST LINE OF CONTROL, NOT THE FIRST**

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Head protection | High visibility | Eye protection |
| Safety footwear | Gloves — task-rated | Hearing protection |

RPE TYPE, FACE-FIT STATUS, AND ANY OTHER PPE REQUIRED

7 PERMITS REQUIRED BEFORE THIS WORK STARTS

No permit is normally required for this activity. The site's own rules may still require one — check before starting, and record any permit issued below.
PERMITS ISSUED FOR THIS WORK (OR NONE)

8 EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS — COMPLETE FOR THIS SITE

FIRST AIDER AND LOCATION

NEAREST A&E

ASSEMBLY POINT

HOW THE ALARM IS RAISED

EMERGENCY ACCESS FOR THIS WORK AREA

SPILL / ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE

9 BRIEFING RECORD — EVERYONE WORKING UNDER THIS RAMS SIGNS BEFORE STARTING

By signing you confirm the contents of this RAMS have been explained to you, you understand the hazards and controls, and you will work to the sequence stated. Tell the supervisor if the work or the site does not match this document — work stops until it does.

NAME	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE

10 PREPARED AND ACCEPTED

Prepared / adapted for this site by — I confirm I have adapted this document to the site, scored the risks, and that it describes how the work will actually be done.

PRINTED NAME	ROLE / COMPETENCE	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE	TIME

Accepted for the site by — principal contractor or site manager review.

PRINTED NAME	ROLE	COMPANY	SIGNATURE	DATE	TIME

Review this RAMS if the work, the site or the law changes, and at least before each new phase of the works. Flatten the completed PDF before filing so the record cannot be silently edited.

R REVISION HISTORY

Every revision of this document, and every review that found nothing to change. The revision on the front of this sheet is the one you are holding — check kubitdocs.com for the current one before use.

Rev	Date	Class	What changed	Authorised by
D0	2026-09-11	first-issue	First issue.	— not yet approved —
A0	2026-09-11	review	Approved for issue by the author. Content unchanged from the reviewed draft; the draft status strip is removed. No independent third-party review has been carried out.	Author — director, UK principal contractor, SMSTS. Not an independent review.

Class: first-issue · material (the law, a control, a field or the scope changed — past buyers are notified) · editorial (wording or layout only) · review (checked, nothing changed) · withdrawal. Revision prefix D = draft, not approved and not for sale; A = approved for issue by the person named, on the date shown.