



Lathe Safety Rules

Lathes are great to work with, you can create so many things, table legs, pens, bowls, just to name a few. The wood stock rotates between the headstock and tailstock to permit carving. Rotating speeds range from 200 to 4,000 rpm. A block of wood that is not secured can fly off with enough force to cause serious injury to the operator or someone standing nearby.

To avoid accidents, the following operational safety rules must be observed by everyone working on the KCWG lathes. Failure to follow the safety rules will result in a loss of shop privileges.

Lathe Safety Rules:

1. Select stock carefully and inspect it closely before undertaking a project. Avoid using wood with knots or splits.
2. Rotate the stock by hand to be sure that it clears the tool rest.
3. Before turning on the power to the lathe, make sure the lathe is in the lowest possible speed. Mechanical speed controls can only be changed while running, and if the work is an out of balance piece of wood you may not have a chance to lower speed.
4. Never adjust the position of the tool rest while the lathe is running.
5. Position the tool rest a little below center of the workpiece and no further than 1/8 inch from the work as workpiece diameter decreases.
6. Confirm the stock is secure before starting. Stand to the side of the machine on the initial start-up to ensure that the stock is secured.
7. Never leave the lathe running unattended.
8. Disconnect the power source before making repairs.
9. Safety glasses with side shields and a face shield must be worn.

Start with a Risk Assessment to ensure a safe work area:

1. A minimum of a two foot perimeter in the back and front of the lathe should be kept clear of people, due to the rotating shaft.
2. Remove loose fitting clothing, jewelry, and tie back long hair and dangling objects that may catch in rotating parts.
3. Give the work your undivided attention.
4. Keep the tools off the lathe bed. Keep the woodturning tools on the same side as the operator, so there is no need to reach over the lathe to get tools or have them fall.

Operational Safety Rules:

1. Approach your work in the KCWG Shop and on the lathe with a safe attitude!
2. Rough out your workpiece on a bandsaw before mounting it on the lathe.
3. Snug the tailstock center against the work and lock it. Lubricate the tailstock center if it is not a ball-bearing center.
4. Hold turning chisels securely on the toolrest, and hold the tool firmly. Always use a slower speed when starting until the workpiece is cylindrical. This helps avoid the possibility of an unbalanced piece jumping out of the lathe and striking the operator.
5. Keep the woodturning tools sharp. A dull chisel requires that you apply excessive feed pressure.
6. Make contact with the work cautiously, and then slowly progress the cut more aggressively.
7. Never use your fingers to check the work for roundness while the lathe is running, especially during roughing operations. Stop the lathe to check the progress, or rest the blade of the tool lightly against the work as it turns.
8. Clean up wood shavings and sawdust often. Sawdust can create a slipping hazard.
9. Remove the tool rest before sanding or polishing on the lathe.
10. When sanding, remember that the spinning stock will cause the sand paper to heat up from the friction of sanding. So sand on a low speed, on the back side of the stock on the down stroke.