



## October 19 — Unplug Before You Reach In

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| Change blade on band saw without unplugging the band saw | Stop action instructed employees to unplug when change blade or any work done around blade or discs and bits. |
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### Learning: Remove the Energy Before the Contact

Changing a blade or working around cutting tools requires more than simply making sure the machine isn't currently running. The energy source needs to be controlled before hands or tools are placed near the blade, disc, or bit.

In this observation, a blade was being changed on a band saw without unplugging the saw. The work was stopped and the employee was instructed to unplug the equipment before changing the blade or performing work around blades, discs, and bits.

The important lesson is to recognize that "not running" does not necessarily mean "safe to reach into." A machine can have stored or available energy that could allow the cutting component to move unexpectedly if the equipment is activated.

Before changing a blade or performing work around a cutting component, stop and think about what could cause that component to move. Then remove or isolate the energy source according to the required procedure.

This expectation extends beyond the band saw. Whenever you're working around a blade, disc, bit, or other moving component, don't rely on the machine simply being switched off. Make sure the energy is controlled before putting yourself in a position where unexpected movement could cause an injury.

Taking the extra step to unplug the equipment is a small part of the job, but it creates an important separation between you and the energy that can move the tool.

### Hazards

- Unexpected movement of the band saw blade
- Contact with a cutting blade
- Hand or finger injury
- Equipment being energized while work is being performed
- Unexpected movement of blades, discs or bits.

### Words of Wisdom

Don't put your hands where energy can reach them. Before changing a blade or working around a cutting component, remove the energy that could make it move.

### Pause and Think

- Is the equipment completely de-energized before I begin?
- Could the blade, disc, or bit move unexpectedly?
- Have I unplugged the equipment before working around the cutting component?
- Am I relying only on the power switch being off?
- What energy source needs to be controlled before I put my hands in the work area?

### Closing Thought

Before you reach toward a blade, make sure you've removed what can make it move. Unplug first. Then work.