

South Downs Woodturners

Serving woodturning in East & West Sussex

Health & Safety Policy

Responsibilities

All Club members are responsible for health and safety on both an individual and collective basis.

Health & Safety initiatives are intended to identify and minimise risk, not to prevent activities taking place or to make doing them onerous or unenjoyable.

Everyone should continually monitor their environment, in your own workshop, at 'Club', or any other event; identifying potential hazards and ensuring practical measures are in place to minimise the risk of injury to yourself and others. If you identify a problem at a 'Club' event you should address the issue immediately, if you are unable to do so you must inform the event organizer or a Committee member.

Further information is available in the HSE 'Five steps to risk assessment' booklet (club website) and the AWGB Handbook (from committee members).

Risk Assessment

The identification of potential hazards and measures required to minimise risks are established by formally carrying out a risk assessment. Once risk assessments have been carried out, relevant members must be informed of their responsibilities to ensure the safety of everyone.

A risk assessment is a written record of a careful examination of activities carried out that could harm people. You should review the HSE document 'Five steps to risk assessment' and complete the Club or other appropriate Risk Assessment Form as required to identify risks and steps to minimise them.

In order to meet the terms of our insurance a Health & Safety Risk Assessment must be carried out regularly for each activity. Completed forms must be held by the Club Secretary on behalf of the Committee. Authors should review their Risk Assessments annually or whenever there is a significant change in circumstances, personnel, equipment or general layout. The following are examples of when Risk Assessments are required in order for members to be covered by 'Club' insurance:

- Demonstrator type events at Club

- Hands-on type events at Club

- Have-a-go type events

- Each individual type of 'Craft Fair' event

- Individual members workshops (only required for e.g. Mentoring)

General Safety Considerations

Injury caused whilst woodturning can invariably be put down to four things:

Not checking the wood can rotate freely before switching on the lathe

Not understanding the correct procedures and safety measures

Experienced turners taking risks due to over familiarity with machinery, tools or processes

Lack of concentration or tiredness

Informing Members

New Members and Guests will be briefed on safety and domestics. Members will be reminded about Health and Safety once a year.

Working Alone

Ensure that you do not exceed your capabilities, particularly when lifting / moving heavy / awkward items. Be extra vigilant when operating machinery. Ensure others know where you are and when you will return. Have an effective means of communication in case of emergency.

Manual handling

Ensure that if you move and manhandle lathes and heavy equipment you are strong enough to do so. Do not let anyone strain themselves when handling heavy equipment. Lifting equipment, trolleys or additional assistance should be obtained and used if there are potential hazards.

Electrical Safety - Portable Appliance Testing (PAT testing)

All portable club equipment (any piece of equipment that is fitted with a plug) should be tested / checked on a regular basis.

All electrical equipment, whether owned by the Club or members must be checked visually before each period of use ensuring for example that:

the flex is in good condition with no cuts or fraying

cable clamps in the appliance and in the plug are clamping the outer sheathing of the flex

there is no sign of burning on the plug or cable

the correct fuse is fitted - if a fuse blows replace it with one of the correct rating (only replace a blown fuse once before identifying the cause)

the switch on the appliance is functioning properly

If any of the above is not right, rectify or replace before using the equipment.

Fire Safety

Owners of premises should have complied with the local fire regulations, however, the Club are responsible for making sure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that a fire isn't started, and in the event of a fire that all persons present are able to exit the premises. Fire risks should be included as part of 'Club' Health & Safety Risk Assessments.

Event organisers / Club members should ensure they are familiar with:

- the location of all fire exits, and that routes to them remain clear (if there are 2 or more make sure that you can reach each exit by a separate route i.e. you don't have to go past one to get to another)
- any fire detection system and the location of break glass call points
- the location of fire extinguishers and their use

Safety Tips

1. Safe, effective use of a wood lathe together with related tools and equipment requires a thorough understanding and application of the instructions and procedures for using these items.
2. Ensure machines and/or tools are in good repair and functioning correctly. Ensure machines (especially lathes and grinders) are secured to a bench or the floor. Check for damaged parts, alignment, binding of moving parts and secure locking of banjos / toolposts etc.
3. Check electrical safety and consider RCD protection. Ensure all electrical items / cables / sockets are protected against moisture including rain / dew etc.
4. Work within your capabilities and limits. An experienced woodturner may be capable of techniques and procedures not recommended for inexperienced turners. Don't overreach, keep proper footing and balance at all times. Seek advice from an experienced practitioner when pushing your boundaries.
5. Always wear eye protection or a full face shield when needed. Provide a screen and consider a barrier to protect spectators and/or keep them at a safe distance.
6. Wood dust control and/or protection should be in place at all times especially when sanding. Hearing protection should be worn during extended periods of operation of noisy equipment. Tie back long hair, do not wear gloves, loose clothing, jewellery or any dangling objects that may catch in rotating parts or accessories. Use suitable footwear to protect against dropped tools etc.
7. Ensure your work area is suitable; with sufficient space to work safely, adequate lighting, ventilation and non slip flooring. Any tent pegs / guy ropes / electrical cables should be made obvious and/or protected.
8. Make certain that any belt guards or covers etc. are in place. Check that all clamping devices (locks), such as on the tailstock and toolrest are tight.
9. Exercise caution when using stock with cracks, splits, checks, bark, knots, irregular shapes or protuberances.

10. Rotate the workpiece by hand to ensure it clears the toolrest and bed before turning the lathe "on". Ensure the workpiece is firmly mounted. Tighten chuck jaws periodically when turning, particularly with green wood, or if you have left wood in the chuck for a period e.g. overnight. When turning between centres, ensure the work is secure with sufficient tailstock pressure.
11. Always set the lathe to a lower speed before turning a new item and keep the speed lower until the workpiece is balanced. This helps avoid the possibility of an unbalanced piece jumping out of the lathe and striking the operator or excessive wobbling of the lathe.
12. Use slower speeds for larger diameter or rough pieces and increased speed for smaller diameters and pieces that are balanced.
13. Never stand in line with the workpiece / grindwheel / sawblade when you switch-on your lathe / grinder / saw. Once running, check for undue vibrations etc. before proceeding. If the lathe is shaking or vibrating, lower the speed. If the workpiece vibrates always stop the machine to check the reason.
14. Hold turning tools securely on the toolrest, and hold the tool in a controlled but comfortable manner before allowing it to touch the workpiece.
15. Turn the lathe "off" before adjusting the tool rest. If you drop the workpiece, a tool, or a chuck key etc. switch the lathe off before bending down or reaching over to pick it up.
16. When running a lathe in reverse the chuck or faceplate can unscrew. Only run your lathe in reverse if you use a spindle locking screw or device.
17. Remove chuck keys and adjusting spanners unless you are actually turning them. Form a habit of checking for these and any spindle locking devices before switching the lathe on.
18. Always remove the toolrest before sanding or polishing operations.
19. Keep tools sharp and clean for better and safer performance. Wear eye protection when sharpening. Don't force a blunt tool. Don't use a tool for a purpose not intended. Keep tools out of reach of children. Do not be tempted to use modified tools, such as converted files etc.
20. Stay alert. Watch what you are doing and use common sense. Don't operate tools when you are tired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
21. Never leave the lathe running unattended. Turn power off when not in use. Don't leave the lathe until it comes to a complete stop.
22. Clear away shavings before scorching or using pyrography, have a damp cloth to hand.
23. Dispose of rags etc used for solvent / oil carefully as they can self ignite.
24. Label all dyes, stains, sealers, thinners, lacquers, polishes etc., keep in appropriate containers in a safe place, away from sources of ignition.

If you are unsure about any aspect of the operation of your tools / equipment or about safety measures, consult a professional or experienced Club member.